

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES No. 4

# Civilization, War and Death

Selections from Three Works by

## SIGMUND FREUD

Edited by

JOHN RICKMAN, M.D.

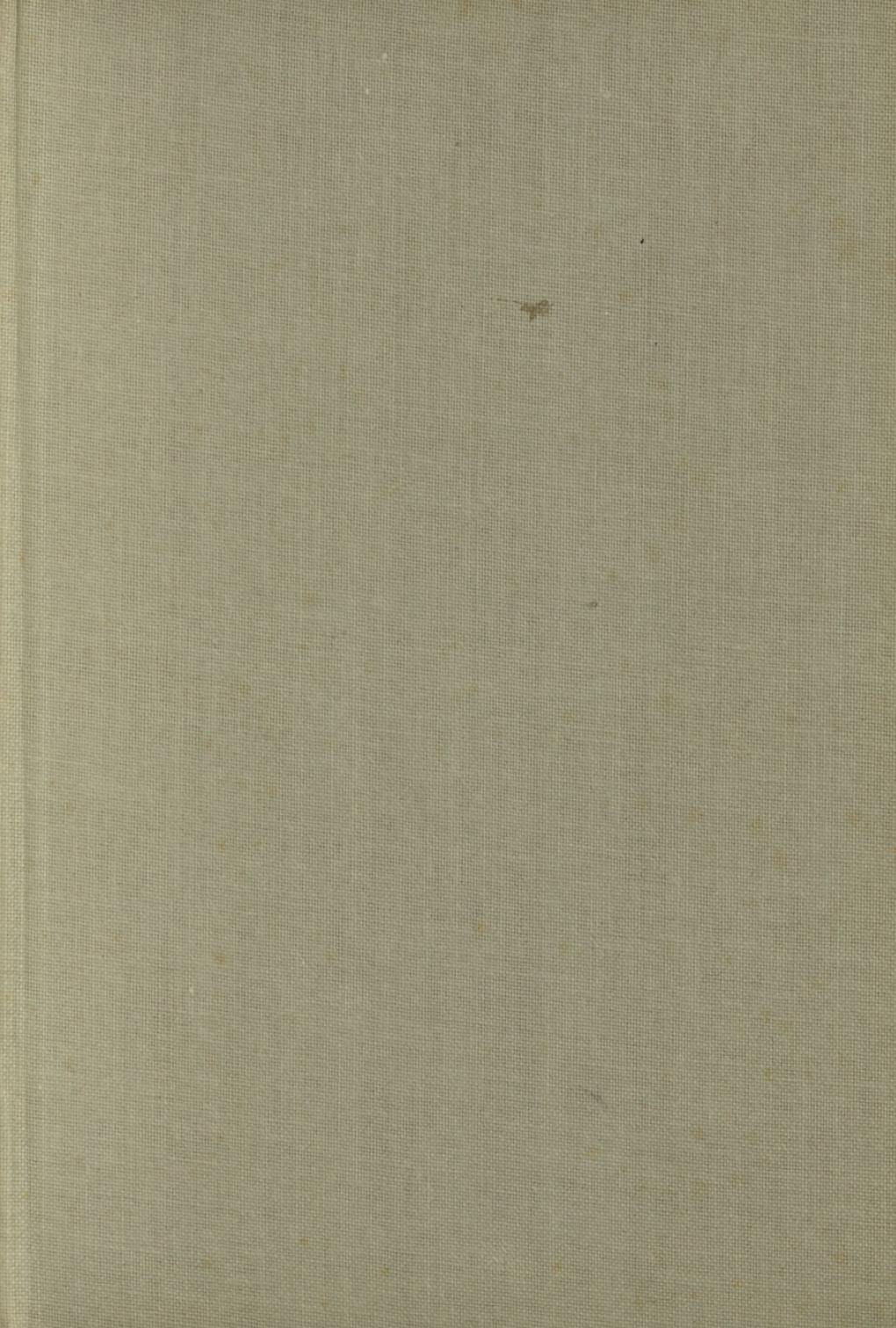


THE HOGARTH PRESS & THE INSTITUTE OF  
PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

SIGMUND FREUD  
Civilization, War and Death  
Selections from Three Works

*A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, the first volume in this series, was taken from his technical writings, and showed the development of his thought in his scientific researches. This *Epitome*, taken from writings for a lay audience, shows more clearly than any other single volume his reflections on three topics of age-long and universal significance in the personal and social life of man. It consists of extracts from a long paper entitled *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915), a book *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), and an open letter to Albert Einstein, *Why War?* (1933).

3s. 6d.  
net



INSTITUTE  
OF  
PSYCHO-ANALYSIS  
012040  
LENDING LIBRARY

012040



WITHDRAWN  
from the Institute of  
Psychoanalysis Library

## PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES

*Editor : JOHN RICKMAN*

- No. 1. *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud.* Edited by John Rickman.
- No. 2. *Love, Hate and Reparation.* Two Lectures by Melanie Klein and Joan Riviere.
- No. 3. *Superstition and Society.* By Roger Money-Kyrle.
- No. 4. *Civilization, War and Death : Selections from Three Works by Sigmund Freud.* Edited by John Rickman.

# Civilization, War and Death

SELECTIONS FROM THREE WORKS BY  
**SIGMUND FREUD**

Edited by JOHN RICKMAN



PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES  
No. 4

PUBLISHED BY THE HOGARTH PRESS,  
52 TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON, AND  
THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

1939

*First published 1939*

*Copyright retained both in the  
translations and as a book of  
selections*

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
BY THE GARDEN CITY PRESS LIMITED,  
AT LETCHWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE

---

*(Set in Baskerville type)*

## CONTENTS

YEAR	PAGE
<i>Preface</i>	vii
1915 THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES ON WAR AND DEATH	I
1929 CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS	26
1933 WHY WAR ?	82
<i>Freud : List of Translations into English</i>	98

NOTE: The usual conventions of editing have been followed in this Epitome. Omissions from the text are marked with three dots . . . (the deletion of footnotes has not been marked). Words added by myself are in square brackets.

Over fifteen thousand words of the full text have been omitted, the length of paragraphs has been altered and some parts put into parentheses. All this manipulation has an unfortunate effect on the rhythm of the author's style, and much has been lost in the process. I hope that readers will remember this and that the author will kindly overlook it.

J. R.

## PREFACE

THE first volume in this Series, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, was in the nature of an exposition of the general theory of psycho-analysis by means of extracts from the technical writings of the founder of that science. The three essays epitomized in this volume were written for laymen and show the mind and spirit of the author at work, with the instruments of thought he himself has devised, upon three things which are in the very marrow of human life. As an introduction to this volume I quote two passages from his *New Introductory Lectures* (1932). The first is taken from the Preface:

‘ It has been my guiding purpose to make no sacrifice in favour of apparent simplicity, completeness and finality, not to hide any problems and not to deny the existence of gaps and uncertainties.

‘ In no other field of scientific work would it be necessary to insist upon the modesty of one’s claims. In every other subject this is taken for granted; the public expect nothing else. No reader of a work on astronomy would feel disappointed and contemptuous of that science, if he were shown the point at which our knowledge of the universe melts into obscurity. Only in psychology is it otherwise; here the constitutional incapacity of men for scientific research comes into full view. It looks as though people did not expect from psychology progress in knowledge, but some other kind of satisfaction; every unsolved problem, every acknowledged uncertainty is turned into a ground of complaint.

‘ Anyone who loves the science of the mind must accept these hardships. . . .’

The second is the concluding paragraph of the book :

' . . . Let me in conclusion sum up what I [have] to say about the relation of psycho-analysis to the question of a *Weltanschauung*. Psycho-analysis is not, in my opinion, in a position to create a *Weltanschauung* of its own. It has no need to do so, for it is a branch of science, and can subscribe to the scientific *Weltanschauung*. The latter, however, hardly merits such a high-sounding name, for it does not take everything into its scope; it is incomplete and it makes no claim to being comprehensive or to constituting a system. Scientific thought is still in its infancy; there are very many of the great problems with which it has yet been unable to cope. A *Weltanschauung* based upon science has, apart from the emphasis it lays upon the real world, essentially negative characteristics, such as that it limits itself to truth and rejects illusions. Those of our fellow-men who are dissatisfied with this state of things and who desire something more for their momentary peace of mind may look for it where they can find it. We shall not blame them for doing so; but we cannot help them and cannot change our own way of thinking on their account.'

J. R.

11 Kent Terrace,  
Regent's Park,  
London, N.W.1.  
January 1939.

# THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES ON WAR AND DEATH<sup>1</sup>

(1915)

## I. THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE WAR

SWEPT as we are into the vortex of this war-time, our information one-sided, ourselves too near to focus the mighty transformations which have already taken place or are beginning to take place, and without a glimmering of the inchoate future, we are incapable of apprehending the significance of the thronging impressions, and know not what value to attach to the judgments we form. We are constrained to believe that never has any event been destructive of so much that is valuable in the common wealth of humanity, nor so misleading to many of the clearest intelligences, nor so debasing to the highest that we know. Science herself has lost her passionless impartiality; in their deep embitterment her servants seek for weapons from her with which to contribute towards the defeat of the enemy. The anthropologist is driven to declare the opponent inferior and degenerate; the psychiatrist to publish his diagnosis of the enemy's disease of mind or spirit. But probably

<sup>1</sup> First published early in 1915 under the title 'Zeit-gemässes über Krieg und Tod' in *Imago*, Bd. IV, 1-21 (in book form in 1924), in *Gesammelte Schriften von Sigm. Freud*, Bd. X, S. 315-346, in *Sammlung kleiner Schriften zur Neurosenlehre*. Vierte Folge. S. 486-520. Translation by E. Colburn Mayne, revised by Joan Riviere, in *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, 288-317.

our sense of these immediate evils is disproportionately strong, and we are not entitled to compare them with the evils of other times of which we have not undergone the experience.

The individual who is not himself a combatant—and so a wheel in the gigantic machinery of war—feels conscious of disorientation, and of an inhibition in his powers and activities. I believe that he will welcome any indication, however slight, which may enable him to find out what is wrong with himself at least. I propose to distinguish two among the most potent factors in the mental distress felt by non-combatants, against which it is such a heavy task to struggle, and to treat of them here: the disillusionment which this war has evoked; and the altered attitude towards death which this—like every other war—imposes on us.

When I speak of disillusionment, everyone at once knows what I mean. One need not be a sentimentalist; one may perceive the biological and psychological necessity of suffering in the economics of human life, and yet condemn war both in its means and in its aims, and devoutly look forward to the cessation of all wars. True, we have told ourselves that wars can never cease so long as nations live under such widely differing conditions, so long as the value of individual life is in each nation so variously computed, and so long as the animosities which divide them represent such powerful instinctual forces in the mind. And we were prepared to find that wars between the primitive and the civilized peoples, between those races whom a colour-line divides, nay, wars with and among the undeveloped nationalities of Europe or those whose culture has perished—that for a considerable period such wars

would occupy mankind. But we permitted ourselves to have other hopes. We had expected the great ruling powers among the white nations upon whom the leadership of the human species has fallen, who were known to have cultivated world-wide interests, to whose creative powers were due our technical advances in the direction of dominating nature, as well as the artistic and scientific acquisitions of the mind—peoples such as these we had expected to succeed in discovering another way of settling misunderstandings and conflicts of interest. Within each of these nations there prevailed high standards of accepted custom for the individual, to which his manner of life was bound to conform if he desired a share in communal privileges. These ordinances, frequently too stringent, exacted a great deal from him, much self-restraint, much renunciation of instinctual gratification. He was especially forbidden to make use of the immense advantages to be gained by the practice of lying and deception in the competition with his fellow-men. The civilized state regarded these accepted standards as the basis of its existence; stern were its proceedings when an impious hand was laid upon them; frequent the pronouncement that to subject them even to examination by a critical intelligence was entirely impracticable. It could be assumed, therefore, that the state itself would respect them, nor would contemplate undertaking any infringement of what it acknowledged as the basis of its own existence. To be sure, it was evident that within these civilized states were mingled remnants of certain other races who were universally unpopular and had therefore been only reluctantly, and even so not to the fullest extent, admitted to participation in the common

task of civilization, for which they had shown themselves suitable enough. But the great nations themselves, it might have been supposed, had acquired so much comprehension of their common interests, and enough tolerance for the differences that existed between them, that 'foreigner' and 'enemy' could no longer, as still in antiquity, be regarded as synonymous. . . .

Then the war in which we had refused to believe broke out, and brought—disillusionment. Not only is it more sanguinary and more destructive than any war of other days, because of the enormously increased perfection of weapons of attack and defence; but it is at least as cruel, as embittered, as implacable as any that has preceded it. It sets at naught all those restrictions known as International Law, which in peace-time the states had bound themselves to observe; it ignores the prerogatives of the wounded and the medical service, the distinction between civil and military sections of the population, the claims of private property. It tramples in blind fury on all that comes in its way, as though there were to be no future and no goodwill among men after it has passed. It rends all bonds of fellowship between the contending peoples, and threatens to leave such a legacy of embitterment as will make any renewal of such bonds impossible for a long time to come. . . .

Nations are in a measure represented by the states which they have formed; these states, by the governments which administer them. The individual in any given nation has in this war a terrible opportunity to convince himself of what would occasionally strike him in peace-time—that the state has forbidden to the individual the practice of wrong-doing, not

because it desired to abolish it, but because it desires to monopolize it, like salt and tobacco. The warring state permits itself every such misdeed, every such act of violence, as would disgrace the individual man. It practises not only the accepted stratagems, but also deliberate lying and deception against the enemy; and this, too, in a measure which appears to surpass the usage of former wars. The state exacts the utmost degree of obedience and sacrifice from its citizens, but at the same time treats them as children by maintaining an excess of secrecy, and a censorship of news and expressions of opinion that renders the spirits of those thus intellectually oppressed defenceless against every unfavourable turn of events and every sinister rumour. It absolves itself from the guarantees and contracts it had formed with other states, and makes unabashed confession of its rapacity and lust for power, which the private individual is then called upon to sanction in the name of patriotism.

Nor may it be objected that the state cannot refrain from wrong-doing, since that would place it at a disadvantage. It is no less disadvantageous, as a general rule, for the individual man to conform to the customs of morality and refrain from brutal and arbitrary conduct; and the state but seldom proves able to indemnify him for the sacrifices it exacts. It cannot be a matter for astonishment, therefore, that this relaxation of all the moral ties between the greater units of mankind should have had a seducing influence on the morality of individuals; for our conscience is not the inflexible judge that ethical teachers are wont to declare it, but in its origin is 'dread of the community' and nothing else. When the community has no rebuke to make, there is an

end of all suppression of the baser passions, and men perpetrate deeds of cruelty, fraud, treachery and barbarity so incompatible with their civilization that one would have held them to be impossible. . . .

In criticism of this disillusionment, certain things must be said. Strictly speaking, it is not justified, for it consists in the destruction of—an illusion! We welcome illusions because they spare us emotional distress, and enable us instead to indulge in gratification. We must not then complain if now and again they come into conflict with some portion of reality, and are shattered against it.

Two things in this war have evoked our sense of disillusionment: the destitution shown in moral relations externally by the states which in their interior relations pose as the guardians of accepted moral usage, and the brutality in behaviour shown by individuals, whom, as partakers in the highest form of human civilization, one would not have credited with such a thing.

Let us begin with the second point and endeavour to formulate, as succinctly as may be, the point of view which it is proposed to criticize. How do we imagine the process by which an individual attains to a higher plane of morality? The first answer is sure to be: He is good and noble from his very birth, his very earliest beginnings. We need not consider this any further. A second answer will suggest that we are concerned with a developmental process, and will probably assume that this development consists in eradicating from him the evil human tendencies and, under the influence of education and a civilized environment, replacing them by good ones. From that standpoint it is certainly astonishing that evil should show itself to

have such power in those who have been thus nurtured.

But this answer implies the thesis from which we propose to dissent. In reality, there is no such thing as 'eradicating' evil tendencies. Psychological—more strictly speaking, psycho-analytic—investigation shows instead that the inmost essence of human nature consists of elemental instincts, which are common to all men and aim at the satisfaction of certain primal needs. These instincts in themselves are neither good nor evil. . . . [They] undergo a lengthy process of development before they are allowed to become active in the adult being. They are inhibited, directed towards other aims and departments, become commingled, alter their objects, and are to some extent turned back upon their possessor. Reaction-formations<sup>1</sup> against certain instincts take the deceptive form of a change in content, as though egoism had changed into altruism, or cruelty into pity. These reaction-formations are facilitated by the circumstance that many instincts are manifested almost from the first in pairs of opposites, a very remarkable phenomenon—and one strange to the lay public—which is termed the 'ambivalence of feeling'.<sup>2</sup> The most easily observable and comprehensible instance of this is the fact that

<sup>1</sup> [For a definition and discussion of this concept see Freud: 'Repression' (1915), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Ch. ix (1921), and *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926).—Edr.]

<sup>2</sup> [For a definition and discussion of this concept see Freud: 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915), 'Repression' (1915), 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Ch. xi (1926).—Edr.]

intense love and intense hatred are so often to be found together in the same person. Psycho-analysis adds that the conflicting feelings not infrequently have the same person for their object.

It is not until all these 'vicissitudes to which instincts are subject' have been surmounted that what we call the character of a human being is formed, and this, as we know, can only very inadequately be classified as 'good' or 'bad'. A human being is seldom altogether good or bad; he is usually 'good' in one relation and 'bad' in another, or 'good' in certain external circumstances and in others decidedly 'bad'. It is interesting to learn that the existence of strong 'bad' impulses in infancy is often the actual condition for an unmistakable inclination towards 'good' in the adult person. Those who as children have been the most pronounced egoists may well become the most helpful and self-sacrificing members of the community; most of our sentimentalists, friends of humanity, champions of animals, have been evolved from little sadists and animal-tormentors.

The transformation of 'bad' instincts is brought about by two co-operating factors, an internal and an external. The internal factor consists in an influence on the bad—say, the egoistic—instincts exercised by eroticism, that is, by the human need for love, taken in its widest sense. By the admixture of *erotic* components the egoistic instincts are transmuted into *social* ones. We learn to value being loved as an advantage for which we are willing to sacrifice other advantages. The external factor is the force exercised by up-bringing, which advocates the claims of our cultural environment, and this is furthered later by the direct pressure of that civilization

by which we are surrounded. Civilization is the fruit of renunciation of instinctual satisfaction, and from each new-comer in turn it exacts the same renunciation. Throughout the life of the individual there is a constant replacement of the external compulsion by the internal. The influences of civilization cause an ever-increasing transmutation of egoistic trends into altruistic and social ones, and this by an admixture of erotic elements. In the last resort it may be said that every internal compulsion which has been of service in the development of human beings was originally, that is, in the evolution of the human race, nothing but an external one. . . .

If we give the name of *cultural adaptability* to a man's personal capacity for transformation of the egoistic impulses under the influence of the erotic, we may further affirm that this adaptability is made up of two parts, one innate and the other acquired through experience, and that the relation of the two to each other and to that portion of the instinctual life which remains untransformed is a very variable one.

Generally speaking, we are apt to attach too much importance to the innate part, and in addition to this we run the risk of overestimating the general adaptability to civilization in comparison with those instincts which have remained in their primitive state—by which I mean that in this way we are led to regard human nature as 'better' than it actually is. . . .

The external compulsion exercised on a human being by his up-bringing and environment produces a further transformation towards good in his instinctual life—a turning from egoism towards altruism. But this is not the regular or necessary effect of the external compulsion. Education and environment offer benefits not only in the way of love, but

also employ another kind of premium system, namely, reward and punishment. In this way their effect may turn out to be that he who is subjected to their influence will choose to 'behave well' in the civilized sense of the phrase, although no ennoblement of instinct, no transformation of egoistic into altruistic inclinations, has taken place within. The result will, roughly speaking, be the same; only a particular concatenation of circumstances will reveal that one man always acts rightly because his instinctual inclination compels him so to do, and the other is 'good' only in so far and for so long as such civilized behaviour is advantageous for his own egoistic purposes. But superficial acquaintance with an individual will not enable us to distinguish between the two cases, and we are certainly misled by our optimism into grossly exaggerating the number of human beings who have been transformed in a civilized sense.

Civilized society, which exacts good conduct and does not trouble itself about the impulses underlying it, has thus won over to obedience a great many people who are not thereby following the dictates of their own natures. Encouraged by this success, society has suffered itself to be led into straining the moral standard to the highest possible point, and thus it has forced its members into a yet greater estrangement from their instinctual dispositions. They are consequently subjected to an unceasing suppression of instinct, the resulting strain of which betrays itself in the most remarkable phenomena of reaction and compensation formations. In the domain of sexuality, where such suppression is most difficult to enforce, the result is seen in the reaction-phenomena of neurotic disorders. Elsewhere the

pressure of civilization brings in its train no pathological results, but is shown in malformations of character, and in the perpetual readiness of the inhibited instincts to break through to gratification at any suitable opportunity. Anyone thus compelled to act continually in the sense of precepts which are not the expression of instinctual inclinations, is living, psychologically speaking, beyond his means, and might objectively be designated a hypocrite, whether this difference be clearly known to him or not. It is undeniable that our contemporary civilization is extraordinarily favourable to the production of this form of hypocrisy. . . . [However], the maintenance of civilization even on so questionable a basis offers the prospect of each new generation achieving a farther-reaching transmutation of instinct, and becoming the pioneer of a higher form of civilization.

From the foregoing observations we may already derive this consolation—that our mortification and our grievous disillusionment regarding the uncivilized behaviour of our world-compatriots in this war are shown to be unjustified. They were based on an illusion to which we had abandoned ourselves. In reality our fellow-citizens have not sunk so low as we feared, because they had never risen so high as we believed. . . .

The evolution of the mind shows a peculiarity which is present in no other process of development. When a village grows into a town, a child into a man, the village and the child become submerged in the town and the man. Memory alone can trace the earlier features in the new image; in reality the old materials or forms have been superseded and

replaced by new ones. It is otherwise with the development of the mind. Here one can describe the state of affairs, which is a quite peculiar one, only by saying that in this case every earlier stage of development persists alongside the later stage which has developed from it; the successive stages condition a co-existence, although it is in reference to the same materials that the whole series of transformations has been fashioned. The earlier mental state may not have manifested itself for years, but none the less it is so far present that it may at any time again become the mode of expression of the forces in the mind, and that exclusively, as though all later developments had been annulled, undone. . . .

It may well happen that a later and higher stage of evolution, once abandoned, cannot be reached again. But the primitive stages can always be re-established; the primitive mind is, in the fullest meaning of the word, imperishable. (What are called mental diseases inevitably impress the layman with the idea of destruction of the life of mind and soul. In reality, the destruction relates only to later accretions and developments. The essence of mental disease lies in a return to earlier conditions of affective life and functioning.) . . .

Thus the transformations of instinct on which our cultural adaptability is based, may be permanently or temporarily undone by the experiences of life. Undoubtedly the influences of war are among the forces that can bring about such regression; therefore we need not deny adaptability for culture to all who are at the present time displaying uncivilized behaviour, and we may anticipate that the refinement of their instincts will be restored in times of peace.

There is, however, another symptom in our world-compatriots which has perhaps astonished and shocked us no less than the descent from their ethical nobility which has so greatly distressed us. I mean the narrow-mindedness shown by the best intellects, their obduracy, their inaccessibility to the most forcible arguments, their uncritical credulity for the most disputable assertions. This indeed presents a lamentable picture, and I wish to say emphatically that in this I am by no means a blind partisan who finds all the intellectual shortcomings on one side. But this phenomenon is much easier to account for and much less disquieting than that which we have just considered. Students of human nature and philosophers have long taught us that we are mistaken in regarding our intelligence as an independent force and in overlooking its dependence upon the emotional life. Our intelligence, they teach us, can function reliably only when it is removed from the influences of strong emotional impulses; otherwise it behaves merely as an instrument of the will and delivers the inference which the will requires. . . . Psycho-analytic experience has, if possible, further confirmed this statement. It daily shows that the shrewdest persons will all of a sudden behave like imbeciles as soon as the needful insight is confronted by an emotional resistance, but will completely regain their wonted acuity once that resistance has been overcome. The logical infatuations into which this war has deluded our fellow-citizens, many of them the best of their kind, are therefore a secondary phenomenon, a consequence of emotional excitement, and are destined, we may hope, to disappear with it.

Having in this way come to understand once more

our fellow-citizens who are now so greatly alienated from us, we shall the more easily endure the disillusionment which the nations, those greater units of the human race, have caused us, for we shall perceive that the demands we make upon them ought to be far more modest. Perhaps they are reproducing the course of individual evolution, and still to-day represent very primitive phases in the organization and formation of higher unities. It is in agreement with this that the educative factor of an external compulsion towards morality, which we found to be so effective for the individual, is barely discernible in them. True, we had hoped that the extensive community of interests established by commerce and production would constitute the germ of such a compulsion, but it would seem that nations still obey their immediate passions far more readily than their interests. Their interests serve them, at most, as rationalizations for their passions; they parade their interests as their justification for satisfying their passions. Actually why the national units should disdain, detest, abhor one another, and that even when they are at peace, is indeed a mystery. . . . Possibly only future stages in development will be able in any way to alter this regrettable state of affairs. But a little more truthfulness and upright dealing on all sides, both in the personal relations of men to one another and between them and those who govern them, should also do something towards smoothing the way for this transformation.

## II. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEATH

The second factor to which I attribute our present sense of estrangement in this once lovely and congenial world is the disturbance that has taken place

in our attitude towards death, an attitude to which hitherto we have clung so fast.

This attitude was far from straightforward. We were of course prepared to maintain that death was the necessary outcome of life, that everyone owes a debt to Nature and must expect to pay the reckoning —in short, that death was natural, undeniable and unavoidable. In reality, however, we were accustomed to behave as if it were otherwise. We displayed an unmistakable tendency to ‘shelve’ death, to eliminate it from life. We tried to hush it up; indeed we even have the saying, ‘To think of something as we think of death’.<sup>1</sup> That is our own death, of course. Our own death is indeed unimaginable, and whenever we make the attempt to imagine it we can perceive that we really survive as spectators. Hence the psycho-analytic school could venture on the assertion that at bottom no one believes in his own death, or to put the same thing in another way, in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality.

As to the death of another, the civilized man will carefully avoid speaking of such a possibility in the hearing of the person concerned. . . . [He] can hardly even entertain the thought of another’s death without seeming to himself hard or evil-hearted; unless, of course, as a physician, lawyer or something of the sort, he has to deal with death professionally. Least of all will he permit himself to think of the death of another if with that event some gain to himself in freedom, means or position is connected. This sensitiveness of ours is of course impotent to arrest the hand of death; when it has fallen, we are always

<sup>1</sup> [The German saying is used as an equivalent for ‘incredible’ or ‘unlikely’.—Trans.]

deeply affected, as if we were prostrated by the overthrow of our expectations. Our habit is to lay stress on the fortuitous causation of the death—accident, disease, infection, advanced age; in this way we betray our endeavour to modify the significance of death from a necessity to an accident. A multitude of simultaneous deaths appears to us exceedingly terrible. Towards the dead person himself we take up a special attitude, something like admiration for one who has accomplished a very difficult task. We suspend criticism of him, overlook his possible misdoings, issue the command: *De mortuis nil nisi bene*, and regard it as justifiable to set forth in the funeral-oration and upon the tombstone only that which is most favourable to his memory. Consideration for the dead, who no longer need it, is dearer to us than the truth, and certainly, for most of us, is dearer also than consideration for the living.

The culmination of this conventional attitude towards death among civilized persons is seen in our complete collapse when death has fallen on some person whom we love—a parent or a partner in marriage, a brother or sister, a child, a dear friend. Our hopes, our pride, our happiness, lie in the grave with him, we will not be consoled, we will not fill the loved one's place. We behave then as if we belonged to the tribe of the Asra, who must die too when those die whom they love.

But this attitude of ours towards death has a powerful effect upon our lives. Life is impoverished, it loses in interest, when the highest stake in the game of living, life itself, may not be risked. . . . Our ties of affection, the unbearable intensity of our grief, make us disinclined to court danger for ourselves and for those who belong to us. . . . We are

paralysed by the thought of who is to replace the son with his mother, the husband with his wife, the father with his children, if there should come disaster. The tendency to exclude death from our calculations brings in its train a number of other renunciations and exclusions. And yet the motto of the Hanseatic League declared: '*Navigare necesse est, vivere non necesse*'! (It is necessary to sail the seas, it is not necessary to live.)

It is an inevitable result of all this that we should seek in the world of fiction, of general literature and of the theatre compensation for the impoverishment of life. There we still find people who know how to die, indeed, who are even capable of killing someone else. There alone too we can enjoy the condition which makes it possible for us to reconcile ourselves with death—namely, that behind all the vicissitudes of life we preserve our existence intact. . . .

It is evident that the war is bound to sweep away this conventional treatment of death. Death will no longer be denied; we are forced to believe in him. People really are dying, and now not one by one, but many at a time, often ten thousand in a single day. Nor is it any longer an accident. To be sure, it still seems a matter of chance whether a particular bullet hits this man or that; but the survivor may easily be hit by another bullet; and the accumulation puts an end to the impression of accident. Life has, in truth, become interesting again; it has regained its full significance. . . .

I have said already that in my opinion the bewilderment and the paralysis of energies, now so generally felt by us, are essentially determined in part by the circumstance that we cannot maintain our former attitude towards death, and have not yet

discovered a new one. Perhaps it will assist us to do this if we direct our psychological inquiry towards two other relations with death—the one which we may ascribe to primitive, prehistoric<sup>1</sup> peoples, and that other which in every one of us still exists, but which conceals itself, invisible to consciousness, in the deepest-lying strata of our mental life. . . .

Primitive man assumed a very remarkable attitude towards death. It was far from consistent, was indeed extremely contradictory. On the one hand, he took death seriously, recognized it as the termination of life and used it to that end; on the other hand, he also denied death, reduced it to nothingness. This contradiction arose from the circumstance that he took up radically different attitudes towards the death of another man, of a stranger, of an enemy, and towards his own. The death of the other man he had no objection to; it meant the annihilation of a creature hated, and primitive man had no scruples against bringing it about. . . . His own death was for primitive man certainly just as unimaginable and unreal as it is for any one of us to-day. But there was for him a case in which the two opposite attitudes towards death came into conflict and joined issue; and this case was momentous and productive of far-reaching results. It occurred when primitive man saw someone who belonged to him die—his wife, his child, his friend, whom assuredly he loved as we love ours, for love cannot be much younger than the lust to kill. Then, in his pain, he had to learn that one can indeed die oneself, an admission

<sup>1</sup> [See Freud: *Totem and Taboo* (1913) in which the author, following clues given by W. Robertson Smith, Atkinson and Charles Darwin, attempted to surmise the characteristics of prehistoric peoples.—Edr.]

against which his whole being revolted; for each of these loved ones was, in very truth, a part of his own beloved ego. But even so, on the other hand, such deaths had a rightfulness for him, since in each of the loved persons something of the hostile stranger had resided. The law of ambivalence of feeling, which to this day governs our emotional relations with those whom we love most, had assuredly a very much wider validity in primitive periods. Thus these beloved dead had also been enemies and strangers who had aroused in him a measure of hostile feeling.<sup>1</sup>

Philosophers have declared that the intellectual enigma presented to primitive man by the picture of death was what forced him to reflection, and thus that it became the starting-point of all speculation. I believe that here the philosophers think too philosophically, and give too little consideration to the primarily effective motives. I would therefore limit and correct this assertion: By the body of his slain enemy primitive man would have triumphed, without racking his brains about the enigma of life and death. Not the intellectual enigma, and not every death, but the conflict of feeling at the death of loved, yet withal alien and hated persons was what disengaged the spirit of inquiry in man. Of this conflict of feeling psychology was the direct offspring. Man could no longer keep death at a distance, for he had tasted of it in his grief for the dead; but still he did not consent entirely to acknowledge it, for he could not conceive of himself as dead. So he devised a compromise; he conceded the fact of death, even his own death, but denied it the significance of

<sup>1</sup> 'Taboo and Ambivalence,' Ch. ii of *Totem and Taboo*.

annihilation, which he had had no motive for contesting where the death of his enemy had been concerned. During his contemplation of his loved one's corpse he invented ghosts, and it was his sense of guilt at the satisfaction mingled with his sorrow that turned these new-born spirits into evil, dreaded demons. The changes wrought by death suggested to him the disjunction of the individuality into a body and a soul—first of all into several souls ; in this way his train of thought ran parallel with the process of disintegration which sets in with death. The enduring remembrance of the dead became the basis for assuming other modes of existence (at first empty of content and but slightly valued), [and] gave him the conception of life continued after apparent death. . . . Much later the different religions devised the view of this after-life as the more desirable, the truly valid one, and degraded the life which is ended by death to a mere preparation. It was then but consistent to extend life backward into the past, to conceive of former existences, transmigrations of the soul and reincarnation, all with the purpose of depriving death of its meaning as the termination of life. So early did the denial of death, which above we designated a convention of civilization, actually originate.

Beside the corpse of the beloved were generated not only the idea of the soul, the belief in immortality, and a great part of man's deep-rooted sense of guilt, but also the earliest inkling of ethical law. The first and most portentous prohibition of the awakening conscience was : Thou shalt not kill. It was born of the reaction against that hate-gratification which lurked behind the grief for the loved dead, and was gradually extended to unloved strangers and finally even to enemies.

This final extension is no longer experienced by civilized man. When the frenzied conflict of this war shall have been decided, every one of the victorious warriors will joyfully return to his home, his wife and his children, undelayed and undisturbed by any thought of the enemy he has slain either at close quarters or by distant weapons of destruction. It is worthy of note that such primitive races as still inhabit the earth act differently in this respect; when [the savage] returns victorious from the war-path he may not set foot in his village nor touch his wife until he has atoned for the murders committed in war by penances which are often prolonged and toilsome. This may be presumed, of course, to be the outcome of superstition; the savage still goes in fear of the avenging spirits of the slain. But the spirits of the fallen enemy are nothing but the expression of his own conscience, uneasy on account of his blood-guiltiness; behind this superstition lurks a vein of ethical sensitiveness which has been lost by us civilized men. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Let us leave primitive man, and turn to the unconscious in our own mental life. Here we depend entirely upon the psycho-analytic method of investigation, the only one which plumbs such depths. We ask what is the attitude of our unconscious towards the problem of death. The answer must be: Almost exactly the same as primitive man's. In this respect, as in many others, the man of prehistoric ages survives unchanged in our unconscious. Thus, our unconscious does not believe in its own death; it behaves as if immortal. What we call our 'unconscious' (the deepest strata of our minds, made

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Totem and Taboo*.

up of instinctual impulses) knows nothing whatever of negatives or of denials—contradictories coincide in it—and so it knows nothing whatever of our own death, for to that we can give only a negative purport. It follows that no instinct we possess is ready for a belief in death. This is even perhaps the secret of heroism. The rational explanation for heroism is that it consists in the decision that the personal life cannot be so precious as certain abstract general ideals. But more frequent, in my view, is that instinctive and impulsive heroism which knows no such motivation, and flouts danger in the spirit of Anzengruber's Hans the Road-Mender: 'Nothing can happen to *me*.' Or else that motivation serves but to clear away the hesitation which might delay an heroic reaction in accord with the unconscious. The dread of death, which dominates us oftener than we know, is on the other hand something secondary, being usually the outcome of the sense of guilt.

On the other hand, for strangers and for enemies, we do acknowledge death, and consign them to it quite as readily and unthinkingly as did primitive man. Here there does, indeed, appear a distinction which in practice shows for a decisive one. Our unconscious does not carry out the killing; it merely thinks it and wishes it. But it would be wrong entirely to depreciate this psychical reality as compared with actual reality. It is significant and pregnant enough. In our unconscious we daily and hourly deport all who stand in our way, all who have offended or injured us. The expression: 'Devil take him!' which so frequently comes to our lips in joking anger, and which really means 'Death take him!' is in our unconscious an earnest deliberate death-wish....

And so, if we are to be judged by the wishes in our

unconscious, we are, like primitive man, simply a gang of murderers. It is well that all these wishes do not possess the potency which was attributed to them by primitive men;<sup>1</sup> in the cross-fire of mutual maledictions mankind would long since have perished, the best and wisest of men and the loveliest and fairest of women with the rest.

Psycho-analysis finds little credence among laymen for assertions such as these. They reject them as calumnies which are confuted by conscious experience, and adroitly overlook the faint indications through which the unconscious is apt to betray itself even to consciousness. . . .

As for primitive man, so also for us in our unconscious, there arises a case in which the two contrasted attitudes towards death, that which acknowledges it as the annihilation of life and the other which denies it as ineffectual to that end, conflict and join issue—and this case is the same as in primitive ages—the death, or the endangered life, of one whom we love, a parent or partner in marriage, a brother or sister, a child or dear friend. These loved ones are on the one hand an inner possession, an ingredient of our personal ego, but on the other hand are partly strangers, even enemies. . . .

The layman feels an extraordinary horror at the possibility of such feelings, and takes this repulsion as a legitimate ground for disbelief in the assertions of psycho-analysis. I think, mistakenly. No depreciation of our love is intended, and none is actually contained in it. It is indeed foreign to our intelligence as also to our feelings thus to couple love and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Omnipotence of Thought', Ch. iii of *Totem and Taboo*.

hate, but Nature, by making use of these twin opposites, contrives to keep love ever vigilant and fresh, so as to guard it against the hate which lurks behind it. It might be said that we owe the fairest flowers of our love-life to the reaction against the hostile impulse which we divine in our breasts.

To sum up: Our unconscious is just as inaccessible to the idea of our own death, as murderously minded towards the stranger, as divided or ambivalent towards the loved, as was man in earliest antiquity. But how far we have moved from this primitive state in our conventionally civilized attitude towards death!

It is easy to see the effect of the impact of war on this duality. It strips us of the later accretions of civilization, and lays bare the primal man in each of us. It constrains us once more to be heroes who cannot believe in their own death; it stamps the alien as the enemy, whose death is to be brought about or desired; it counsels us to rise above the death of those we love. But war is not to be abolished; so long as the conditions of existence among the nations are so varied, and the repulsions between peoples so intense, there will be, must be, wars. The question then arises: Is it not we who must give in, who must adapt ourselves to them? Is it not for us to confess that in our civilized attitude towards death we are once more living psychologically beyond our means, and must reform and give truth its due? Would it not be better to give death the place in actuality and in our thoughts which properly belongs to it, and to yield a little more prominence to that unconscious attitude towards death which we have hitherto so carefully suppressed? This hardly seems indeed a greater

achievement, but rather a backward step in more than one direction, a regression; but it has the merit of taking somewhat more into account the true state of affairs, and of making life again more endurable for us. To endure life remains, when all is said, the first duty of all living beings. Illusion can have no value if it makes this more difficult for us.

We remember the old saying: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. If you desire peace, prepare for war.

It would be timely thus to paraphrase it: *Si vis vitam, para mortem*. If you would endure life, be prepared for death.

# CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS<sup>1</sup>

(1929)

## I

THE impression forces itself upon one that men measure by false standards, that everyone seeks power, success, riches for himself and admires others who attain them, while undervaluing the truly precious things in life. And yet, in making any general judgment of this kind one is in danger of forgetting the manifold variety of humanity and its mental life. There are certain men from whom their contemporaries do not withhold veneration, although their greatness rests on attributes and achievements which are completely foreign to the aims and ideals of the multitude. One might well be inclined to suppose that after all it is only a minority who appreciate these great men, while the majority cares nothing for them. But the discrepancy between men's opinions and their behaviour is so wide and their desires so many-sided that things are probably not so simple. . . .

## II

In my *Future of an Illusion*<sup>2</sup> I was concerned much less with the deepest sources of religious feeling than with what the ordinary man understands by his

<sup>1</sup> *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (Vienna: 1929). Translation by Joan Riviere. (London: 1930.)

<sup>2</sup> Vienna: 1927. London: 1928.

religion, that system of doctrines and pledges that on the one hand explains the riddle of this world to him with an enviable completeness, and on the other assures him that a solicitous Providence is watching over him and will make up to him in a future existence for any shortcomings in this life. The ordinary man cannot imagine this Providence in any other form but that of a greatly exalted father, for only such a one could understand the needs of the sons of men, or be softened by their prayers and placated by the signs of their remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so incongruous with reality, that to one whose attitude to humanity is friendly it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life. . . .

The well-known words of one of our great and wise poets come to mind in which he expresses his view of the relation of religion to art and science. They run:

He who has Science and has Art,  
Religion, too, has he;  
Who has not Science, has not Art,  
Let him religious be!<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand, these words contrast religion with the two highest achievements of man, and on the other, they declare that in respect of their value in life they can represent or replace each other. If we wish to deprive even the ordinary man, too, of his religion, we shall clearly not have the authority of the poet on our side. We will seek to get in touch with the meaning of his utterance by a special way.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe, *Zahmen Xenien IX* (Gedichte aus dem Nachlass).

Life as we find it is too hard for us; it entails too much pain, too many disappointments, impossible tasks. We cannot do without palliative remedies. We cannot dispense with auxiliary constructions, as Theodor Fontane said. There are perhaps three of these means: powerful diversions of interest, which lead us to care little about our misery; substitutive gratifications, which lessen it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensitive to it. Something of this kind is indispensable.<sup>1</sup> Voltaire is aiming at a diversion of interest when he brings his *Candide* to a close with the advice that people should cultivate their gardens; scientific work is another deflection of the same kind. The substitute gratifications, such as art offers, are illusions in contrast to reality, but none the less satisfying to the mind on that account, thanks to the place which phantasy has reserved for herself in mental life. The intoxicating substances affect our body, alter its chemical processes. It is not so simple to find the place where religion belongs in this series. We must look further afield.

The question, 'What is the purpose of human life?' has been asked times without number; it has never received a satisfactory answer; perhaps it does not admit of such an answer. Many a questioner has added that if it should appear that life has no purpose, then it would lose all value for him. . . . One can hardly go wrong in concluding that the idea of a purpose in life stands and falls with the religious system.

We will turn to the less ambitious problem, what the behaviour of men themselves reveals as the pur-

<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Busch, in *Die fromme Helene*, says the same thing on a lower level: 'The man who has cares has brandy too.'

pose and object of their lives, what they demand of life and wish to attain in it. The answer to this can hardly be in doubt: they seek happiness, they want to become happy and to remain so. There are two sides to this striving, a positive and a negative; it aims on the one hand at eliminating pain and discomfort, on the other at the experience of intense pleasures. . . . What is called happiness in its narrowest sense comes from the satisfaction—most often instantaneous—of pent-up needs which have reached great intensity, and by its very nature can only be a transitory experience. When any condition desired by the pleasure-principle<sup>1</sup> is protracted, it results in a feeling only of mild comfort; we are so constituted that we can only intensely enjoy contrasts, much less intensely states in themselves.<sup>2</sup> Our possibilities of happiness are thus limited from the start by our very constitution. It is much less difficult to be unhappy. Suffering comes from three quarters: from our own body, which is destined to decay and dissolution, and cannot even dispense with anxiety and pain as danger-signals; from the outer world, which can rage against us with the most powerful and pitiless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations with other men. The unhappiness which has this last origin we find perhaps more painful than any other; we tend to regard it more or less as a gratuitous

<sup>1</sup> [For a definition and discussion of this concept, and the later mentioned 'reality-principle', see Freud: 'Formulations regarding the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).—Edr.]

<sup>2</sup> Goethe even warns us that 'nothing is so hard to bear as a train of happy days'. This may be an exaggeration all the same.

addition, although it cannot be any less an inevitable fate than the suffering that proceeds from other sources.

It is no wonder if, under the pressure of these possibilities of suffering, humanity is wont to reduce its demands for happiness, just as even the pleasure-principle itself changes into the more accommodating reality-principle under the influence of external environment; if a man thinks himself happy when he has merely escaped unhappiness or weathered trouble; if in general the task of avoiding pain forces that of obtaining pleasure into the background. Reflection shows that there are very different ways of attempting to perform this task; and all these ways have been recommended by the various schools of wisdom in the art of life and put into practice by men. Unbridled gratification of all desires forces itself into the foreground as the most alluring guiding principle in life, but it entails preferring enjoyment to caution and penalizes itself after short indulgence. The other methods, in which avoidance of pain is the main motive, are differentiated according to the source of the suffering against which they are mainly directed. Some of these measures are extreme and some moderate, some are one-sided and some deal with several aspects of the matter at once. Voluntary loneliness, isolation from others, is the readiest safeguard against the unhappiness that may arise out of human relations. We know what this means: the happiness found along this path is that of peace. Against the dreaded outer world one can defend oneself only by turning away in some other direction, if the difficulty is to be solved single-handed. There is indeed another and a better way: that of combining with the rest of the human community and taking up the attack on nature, thus forcing it to

obey human will, under the guidance of science. One is working then with all for the good of all. . . .

The crudest of the methods of influencing the body, but also the most effective, is the chemical one: that of intoxication. I do not think anyone entirely understands their operation, but it is a fact that there are certain substances foreign to the body which, when present in the blood or tissues, directly cause us pleasurable sensations, but also so change the conditions of our perceptivity that we become insensible of disagreeable sensations. The two effects not only take place simultaneously, they seem to be closely bound up with each other. But there must be substances in the chemical composition of our bodies which can do the same, for we know of at least one morbid state, that of mania, in which a condition similar to this intoxication arises without any drug being absorbed. Besides this, our normal mental life shows variations, according to which pleasure is experienced with more or less ease, and along with this goes a diminished or increased sensitivity to pain. It is greatly to be regretted that this toxic aspect of mental processes has so far eluded scientific research. The services rendered by intoxicating substances in the struggle for happiness and in warding off misery rank so highly as a benefit that both individuals and races have given them an established position within their libido-economy. It is not merely the immediate gain in pleasure which one owes to them, but also a measure of that independence of the outer world which is so sorely craved. . . . We are aware that it is just this property which constitutes the danger and injuriousness of intoxicating substances. . . .

Another method of guarding against pain is by using the libido-displacements that our mental

equipment allows of, by which it gains so greatly in flexibility. The task is then one of transferring the instinctual aims into such directions that they cannot be frustrated by the outer world. Sublimation of the instincts lends an aid in this. Its success is greatest when a man knows how to heighten sufficiently his capacity for obtaining pleasure from mental and intellectual work. Fate has little power against him then. This kind of satisfaction, such as the artist's joy in creation, in embodying his phantasies, or the scientist's in solving problems or discovering truth, has a special quality which we shall certainly one day be able to define metapsychologically. Until then we can only say metaphorically it seems to us 'higher and finer', but compared with that of gratifying gross primitive instincts its intensity is tempered and diffused; it does not overwhelm us physically. The weak point of this method, however, is that it is not generally applicable; it is only available to the few. It presupposes special gifts and dispositions which are not very commonly found in a sufficient degree. And even to these few it does not secure complete protection against suffering; it gives no invulnerable armour against the arrows of fate, and it usually fails when a man's own body becomes a source of suffering to him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When there is no special disposition in a man imperatively prescribing the direction of his life-interest, the ordinary work all can do for a livelihood can play the part which Voltaire wisely advocated it should do in our lives. It is not possible to discuss the significance of work for the economics of the libido adequately within the limits of a short survey. Laying stress upon importance of work has a greater effect than any other technique of living in the direction of binding the

This behaviour reveals clearly enough its aim—that of making oneself independent of the external world, by looking for happiness in the inner things of the mind; in the next method the same features are even more marked. The connection with reality is looser still; satisfaction is obtained through illusions, which are recognized as such, without the discrepancy between them and reality being allowed to interfere with the pleasure they give. These illusions are derived from the life of phantasy which, at the time when the sense of reality developed, was expressly exempted from the demands of the reality-test and set apart for the purpose of fulfilling wishes which would be very hard to realize. At the head of these phantasy-pleasures stands the enjoyment of works of art which through the agency of the artist is opened to those who cannot themselves

individual more closely to reality; in his work he is at least securely attached to a part of reality, the human community. Work is no less valuable for the opportunity it and the human relations connected with it provide for a very considerable discharge of libidinal component impulses, narcissistic, aggressive and even erotic, than because it is indispensable for subsistence and justifies existence in a society. The daily work of earning a livelihood affords particular satisfaction when it has been selected by free choice, *i.e.* when through sublimation it enables use to be made of existing inclinations, of instinctual impulses that have retained their strength, or are more intense than usual for constitutional reasons. And yet as a path to happiness work is not valued very highly by men. They do not run after it as they do after other opportunities for gratification. The great majority work only when forced by necessity, and this natural human aversion to work gives rise to the most difficult social problems.

create.<sup>1</sup> Those who are sensitive to the influence of art do not know how to rate it high enough as a source of happiness and consolation in life. Yet art affects us but as a mild narcotic and can provide no more than a temporary refuge for us from the hardships of life; its influence is not strong enough to make us forget real misery.

Another method operates more energetically and thoroughly; it regards reality as the source of all suffering, as the one and only enemy, with whom life is intolerable and with whom therefore all relations must be broken off if one is to be happy in any way at all. The hermit turns his back on this world; he will have nothing to do with it. But one can do more than that; one can try to re-create it, try to build up another instead, from which the most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others corresponding to one's own wishes. . . . When a large number of people make this attempt together and try to obtain assurance of happiness and protection from suffering by a delusional transformation of reality it acquires special significance. The religions of humanity, too, must be classified as mass-delusions of this kind. Needless to say, no one who shares a delusion recognizes it as such. . . .

One method I have not yet mentioned at all—not because I had forgotten it, but because it will interest us in another connection. How would it be possible to forget this way of all others of practising the art of life! It is conspicuous for its remarkable capacity to combine characteristic features. Needless

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Formulations regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning' (1911), *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV; and *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1915-17), London, 1922, chapter xxiii.

to say, it, too, strives to bring about independence of fate—as we may best call it—and with this object it looks for satisfaction within the mind, and uses the capacity for displacing libido which we mentioned before, but it does not turn away from the outer world; on the contrary, it takes a firm hold of its objects and obtains happiness from an emotional relation to them. Nor is it content to strive for avoidance of pain—that goal of weary resignation; rather it passes that by heedlessly and holds fast to the deep-rooted, passionate striving for a positive fulfilment of happiness. Perhaps it really comes nearer to this goal than any other method. I am speaking, of course, of that way of life which makes love the centre of all things and anticipates all happiness from loving and being loved. This attitude is familiar enough to all of us; one of the forms in which love manifests itself, sexual love, gives us our most intense experience of an overwhelming pleasurable sensation and so furnishes a prototype for our strivings after happiness. What is more natural than that we should persist in seeking happiness along the path by which we first encountered it? The weak side of this way of living is clearly evident; and were it not for this, no human being would ever have thought of abandoning this path to happiness in favour of any other. We are never so defenceless against suffering as when we love, never so forlornly unhappy as when we have lost our love-object or its love. But this does not complete the story of that way of life which bases happiness on love; there is much more to be said about it.

We may here go on to consider the interesting case in which happiness in life is sought first and foremost in the enjoyment of beauty, wherever it

is to be found by our senses and our judgment, the beauty of human forms and movements, of natural objects, of landscapes, of artistic and even scientific creations. As a goal in life this æsthetic attitude offers little protection against the menace of suffering, but it is able to compensate for a great deal. The enjoyment of beauty produces a particular, mildly intoxicating kind of sensation. There is no very evident use in beauty; the necessity of it for cultural purposes is not apparent, and yet civilization could not do without it. . . . Unfortunately, psycho-analysis has less to say about beauty than about most things. Its derivation from the realms of sexual sensation is all that seems certain; the love of beauty is a perfect example of a feeling with an inhibited aim. 'Beauty' and 'attraction' are first of all the attributes of a sexual object. It is remarkable that the genitals themselves, the sight of which is always exciting, are hardly ever regarded as beautiful; the quality of beauty seems, on the other hand, to attach to certain secondary sexual characters.

In spite of the incompleteness of these considerations, I will venture on a few remarks in conclusion of this discussion. The goal towards which the pleasure-principle impels us—of becoming happy—is not attainable; yet we may not—nay, cannot—give up the effort to come nearer to realization of it by some means or other. Very different paths have been taken towards it; some pursue the positive aspect of the aim, attainment of pleasure; others the negative, avoidance of pain. By none of these ways can we achieve all that we desire. In that modified sense in which we have seen it to be attainable, happiness is a problem of the economics of the libido in each individual. There is no sovereign

recipe in this matter which suits all; each one must find out for himself by which particular means he may achieve felicity. All kinds of different factors will operate to influence his choice. It depends on how much real gratification he is likely to obtain in the external world, and how far he will find it necessary to make himself independent of it; finally, too, on the belief he has in himself of his power to alter it in accordance with his wishes. Even at this stage the mental constitution of the individual will play a decisive part, aside from any external considerations. The man who is predominantly erotic will choose emotional relationships with others before all else; the narcissistic type, who is more self-sufficient, will seek his essential satisfactions in the inner workings of his own soul; the man of action will never abandon the external world in which he can essay his power. . . .

Just as a cautious business-man avoids investing all his capital in one concern, so wisdom would probably admonish us also not to anticipate all our happiness from one quarter alone. Success is never certain; it depends on the co-operation of many factors, perhaps on none more than the capacity of the mental constitution to adapt itself to the outer world and then utilize this last for obtaining pleasure. Anyone who is born with a specially unfavourable instinctual constitution, and whose libido-components do not go through the transformation and modification necessary for successful achievement in later life, will find it hard to obtain happiness from his external environment, especially if he is faced with the more difficult tasks. One last possibility of dealing with life remains to such people and it offers them at least substitute-gratifications; it takes the

form of the flight into neurotic illness, and they mostly adopt it while they are still young. Those whose efforts to obtain happiness come to nought in later years still find consolation in the pleasure of chronic intoxication, or else they embark upon that despairing attempt at revolt—psychosis. . . .

There are many paths by which the happiness attainable for man can be reached, but none which is certain to take him to it. Nor can religion keep her promises either. When the faithful find themselves reduced in the end to speaking of God's 'inscrutable decree', they thereby avow that all that is left to them in their sufferings is unconditional submission as a last-remaining consolation and a source of happiness. And if a man is willing to come to this, he could probably have arrived there by a shorter road.

### III

Our discussion of happiness has so far not taught us much that is not already common knowledge. Nor does the prospect of discovering anything new seem much greater if we go on with the problem why it is so hard for mankind to be happy. We gave the answer before, when we cited the three sources of human sufferings, namely, the superior force of nature, the disposition to decay of our bodies, and the inadequacy of our methods of regulating human relations in the family, the community and the state. In regard to the first two, our judgment cannot hesitate: it forces us to recognize these sources of suffering and to submit to the inevitable. . . . To the third, the social source of our distresses, we take up a different attitude. We prefer not to regard it as one at all; we cannot see why the

systems we have ourselves created should not rather ensure protection and well-being for us all. To be sure, when we consider how unsuccessful our efforts to safeguard against suffering in this particular have proved, the suspicion dawns upon us that a bit of unconquerable nature lurks concealed behind this difficulty as well—in the shape of our own mental constitution. When we start to consider this possibility, we come across a point of view which is so amazing that we will pause over it. According to it our so-called civilization itself is to blame for a great part of our misery, and we should be much happier if we were to give it up and go back to primitive conditions. I call this amazing, because however one may define culture—it is undeniable that every means by which we try to guard ourselves against menaces from the several sources of human distress is a part of this same culture. . . .

It is time that we should turn our attention to the nature of this culture, the value of which is so much disputed from the point of view of happiness. Until we have learnt something by examining it for ourselves, we will not look round for formulas which express its essence in a few words. We will be content to repeat<sup>1</sup> that the word 'culture' describes the sum of the achievements and institutions which differentiate our lives from those of our animal forebears and serve two purposes, namely, that of protecting humanity against nature and of regulating the relations of human beings among themselves. . . .

We recognize that a country has attained a high level of civilization when we find that everything in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Future of an Illusion* (1927).

it that can be helpful in exploiting the earth for man's benefit and in protecting him against nature—everything, in short, that is useful to him—is cultivated and effectively protected. . . . We count it also as proof of a high level of civilization when we see that the industry of the inhabitants is applied as well to things which are not in the least useful and, on the contrary, seem to be useless, e.g. when the parks and gardens in a town, which are necessary as playgrounds and air-reservoirs, also bear flowering plants, or when the windows of dwellings are adorned with flowers. We soon become aware that the useless thing which we require of civilization is beauty; we expect a cultured people to revere beauty where it is found in nature and to create it in their handiwork so far as they are able. But this is far from exhausting what we require of civilization. Besides, we expect to see the signs of cleanliness and order. . . . Dirt of any kind seems to us incompatible with civilization; . . . indeed, we are not surprised if anyone employs the use of soap as a direct measure of civilization. It is the same with order, which, like cleanliness, relates entirely to man's handiwork. . . . Order is a kind of repetition-compulsion by which it is ordained once for all when, where and how a thing shall be done so that on every similar occasion doubt and hesitation shall be avoided. The benefits of order are incontestable: it enables us to use space and time to the best advantage, while saving expenditure of mental energy....

Beauty, cleanliness and order clearly occupy a peculiar position among the requirements of civilization. No one will maintain that they are as essential to life as the activities aimed at controlling the forces of nature and as other factors which we have yet to

mention; and yet no one would willingly relegate them to the background as trivial matters. . . .

According to general opinion, however, there is one feature of culture which characterizes it better than any other, and that is the value it sets upon the higher mental activities—intellectual, scientific and æsthetic achievement — the leading part it concedes to ideas in human life. First and foremost among these ideas come the religious systems with their complicated evolution, on which I have elsewhere endeavoured to throw a light<sup>1</sup>; next to them come philosophical speculations; and last, the ideals man has formed, his conceptions of the perfection possible in an individual, in a people, in humanity as a whole, and the demands he makes on the basis of these conceptions. . . .

We now have to consider the last, and certainly by no means the least important, of the components of culture, namely, the ways in which social relations, the relations of one man to another, are regulated, all that has to do with him as a neighbour, a source of help, a sexual object to others, a member of a family or of a state. . . . Perhaps one might begin with the statement that the first attempt ever made to regulate these social relations already contained the essential element of civilization. Had no such attempt been made, these relations would be subject to the wills of individuals: that is to say, the man who was physically strongest would decide things in accordance with his own interests and desires. . . . The substitution of the power of a united number for

<sup>1</sup> [See Freud: *Totem and Taboo* (1913), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' (1915), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923).—Edr.]

the power of a single man is the decisive step towards civilization. The essence of it lies in the circumstance that the members of the community have restricted their possibilities of gratification, whereas the individual recognized no such restrictions. The first requisite of culture, therefore, is justice—that is, the assurance that a law once made will not be broken in favour of any individual. This implies nothing about the ethical value of any such law. The further course of cultural development seems to tend towards ensuring that the law shall no longer represent the will of any small body—caste, tribe, section of the population—which may behave like a predatory individual towards other such groups perhaps containing larger numbers. . . . A great part of the struggles of mankind centres round the single task of finding some expedient (i.e. satisfying) solution between individual claims and those of the civilized community; it is one of the problems of man's fate whether this solution can be arrived at in some particular form of culture or whether the conflict will prove irreconcilable. . . .

The evolution of culture seems to us a peculiar kind of process passing over humanity, of which several aspects strike us as familiar. We can describe this process in terms of the modifications it effects on the known human instinctual dispositions, which it is the economic task of our lives to satisfy. Some of these instincts become *absorbed*, as it were, so that something appears in place of them which in an individual we call a character-trait. . . . *Sublimation* of instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural evolution; this it is that makes it possible for the higher mental operations, scientific, artistic, ideological activities, to play such an important part

in civilized life. If one were to yield to a first impression, one would be tempted to say that sublimation is a fate which has been forced upon instincts by culture alone. But it is better to reflect over this a while longer. Thirdly and lastly, and this seems most important of all, it is impossible to ignore the extent to which civilization is built up on *renunciation* of instinctual gratifications, the degree to which the existence of civilization presupposes the non-gratification (suppression, repression or something else ?) of powerful instinctual urgencies. This 'cultural privation' dominates the whole field of social relations between human beings; we know already that it is the cause of the antagonism against which all civilization has to fight. It sets hard tasks for our scientific work, too; we have a great deal to explain here. It is not easy to understand how it can become possible to withhold satisfaction from an instinct. Nor is it by any means without risk to do so; if the deprivation is not made good economically, one may be certain of producing serious disorders. . . .

Now we must attack another problem and put the question: what are the influences to which the evolution of culture owes its origin, how did it arise and what determined its course ?

#### IV

This task seems too big a one; one may well confess oneself diffident. Here follows what little I have been able to elicit about it.

Once primitive man had made the discovery that it lay in his own hands—speaking literally—to improve his lot on earth by working, it cannot have been a matter of indifference to him whether another

man worked with him or against him. The other acquired the value of a fellow-worker, and it was advantageous to live with him. One may suppose that the founding of families was in some way connected with the period when the need for genital satisfaction, no longer appearing like an occasional guest who turns up suddenly and then vanishes without letting one hear anything of him for long intervals, had settled down with each man like a permanent lodger. When this happened, the male acquired a motive for keeping the female, or rather, his sexual objects, near him; while the female, who wanted not to be separated from her helpless young, in their interests, too, had to stay by the stronger male. In this primitive family one essential feature of culture is lacking: the will of the father, the head of it, was unfettered. I have endeavoured in *Totem and Taboo* to show how the way led from this family-life to the succeeding phase of communal existence in the form of a band of brothers. By overpowering the father, the sons had discovered that several men united can be stronger than a single man. The totemic stage of culture is founded upon the restrictions that the band were obliged to impose on one another in order to maintain the new system. These taboos were the first 'Right' or law. The life of human beings in common therefore had a twofold foundation, i.e. the compulsion to work, created by external necessity, and the power of love, causing the male to wish to keep his sexual object, the female, near him, and the female to keep near her that part of herself which has become detached from her, her child. Eros and Ananke were the parents of human culture, too. The first result of culture was that a larger number of human beings could then live

together in common. And since the two great powers were here co-operating together, one might have expected that further cultural evolution would have proceeded smoothly towards ever greater mastery over the external world, as well as towards greater extension in the numbers of men sharing the life in common. Nor is it easy to understand how this culture can be felt as anything but satisfying by those who partake of it.

Before we go on to inquire where the disturbances in it arise, we will let ourselves digress from the point that love was one of the founders of culture and so fill a gap left in our previous discussion. We said that man, having found by experience that sexual (genital) love afforded him his greatest gratification, so that it became in effect a prototype of all happiness to him, must have been thereby impelled to seek his happiness further along the path of sexual relations, to make genital eroticism the central point of his life. We went on to say that in so doing he becomes to a very dangerous degree dependent on a part of the outer world, namely, on his chosen love-object, and this exposes him to most painful sufferings if he is rejected by it or loses it through death or defection. The wise men of all ages have consequently warned us emphatically against this way of life; but in spite of all it retains its attraction for a great number of people.

A small minority are enabled by their constitution nevertheless to find happiness along the path of love; but far-reaching mental transformations of the erotic function are necessary before this is possible. These people make themselves independent of their object's acquiescence by transferring the main value from the fact of being loved to their own act of

loving; they protect themselves against loss of it by attaching their love not to individual objects but to all men equally, and they avoid the uncertainties and disappointments of genital love by turning away from its sexual aim and modifying the instinct into an impulse with an *inhibited aim*. The state which they induce in themselves by this process—an unchangeable, undeviating, tender attitude—has little superficial likeness to the stormy vicissitudes of genital love, from which it is nevertheless derived....

Love with an inhibited aim was indeed originally full sensual love and in men's unconscious minds is so still. Both of them, the sensual and the aim-inhibited forms, reach out beyond the family and create new bonds with others who before were strangers. Genital love leads to the forming of new families; aim-inhibited love leads to 'friendships', which are valuable culturally because they do not entail many of the limitations of genital love—for instance, its exclusiveness. But the interrelations between love and culture lose their simplicity as development proceeds. On the one hand, love opposes the interests of culture; on the other, culture menaces love with grievous restrictions.

The rift between them seems inevitable; the cause of it is not immediately recognizable. It expresses itself first in a conflict between the family and the larger community to which the individual belongs. We have seen already that one of culture's principal endeavours is to cement men and women together into larger units. But the family will not give up the individual. The closer the attachment between the members of it, the more they often tend to remain aloof from others, and the harder it is for them to enter into the wider circle of the world at large....

The next discord is caused by women, who soon become antithetical to cultural trends and spread around them their conservative influence—the women who at the beginning laid the foundations of culture by the appeal of their love. . . . Since man has not an unlimited amount of mental energy at his disposal, he must accomplish his tasks by distributing his libido to the best advantage. What he employs for cultural purposes he withdraws to a great extent from women and his sexual life; his constant association with men and his dependence on his relations with them even estrange him from his duties as husband and father. . . .

The tendency of culture to set restrictions upon sexual life is no less evident than its other aim of widening its sphere of operations. . . . Further limitations are laid by taboos, laws and customs, which touch men as well as women. Various types of culture differ in the lengths to which they carry this; and the material structure of the social fabric also affects the measure of sexual freedom that remains. We have seen that culture obeys the laws of psychological economic necessity in making the restrictions, for it obtains a great part of the mental energy it needs by subtracting it from sexuality. Culture behaves towards sexuality in this respect like a tribe or a section of the population which has gained the upper hand and is exploiting the rest to its own advantage. Fear of a revolt among the oppressed then becomes a motive for even stricter regulations. A high-water mark in this type of development has been reached in our Western European civilization. . . . Object-choice is narrowed down to the opposite sex and most of the extra-genital forms of satisfaction are interdicted as

perversions. The standard which declares itself in these prohibitions is that of a sexual life identical for all; it pays no heed to the disparities in the inborn and acquired sexual constitutions of individuals and cuts off a considerable number of them from sexual enjoyment, thus becoming a cause of grievous injustice. The effect of these restrictive measures might presumably be that all the sexual interest of those who are normal and not constitutionally handicapped could flow without further forfeiture into the channel left open to it. But the only outlet not thus censured, hetero-sexual genital love, is further circumscribed by the barriers of legitimacy and monogamy. Present-day civilization gives us plainly to understand that sexual relations are permitted only on the basis of a final, indissoluble bond between a man and woman; that sexuality as a source of enjoyment for its own sake is unacceptable to it; and that its intention is to tolerate it only as the hitherto irreplaceable means of multiplying the human race.

This, of course, represents an extreme. Everyone knows that it has proved impossible to put it into execution, even for short periods. Only the weaklings have submitted to such comprehensive interference with their sexual freedom, and stronger natures have done so only under one compensatory condition, of which mention may be made later. Civilized society has seen itself obliged to pass over in silence many transgressions which by its own ordinances it ought to have penalized. This does not justify anyone, however, in leaning towards the other side and assuming that, because it does not achieve all it aims at, such an attitude on the part of society is altogether harmless. . . .

## V

. . . When a love-relationship is at its height no room is left for any interest in the surrounding world; the pair of lovers are sufficient unto themselves, [they] do not even need the child they have in common to make them happy. . . . From all this we might well imagine that a civilized community could consist of pairs of individuals such as this, libidinally satisfied in each other, and linked to all the others by work and common interests. If this were so, culture would not need to levy energy from sexuality. But such a desirable state of things does not exist and never has existed; in actuality culture is not content with such limited ties as these; we see that it endeavours to bind the members of the community to one another by libidinal ties as well, that it makes use of every means and favours every avenue by which powerful identifications can be created among them, and that it exacts a heavy toll of aim-inhibited libido in order to strengthen communities by bonds of friendship between the members. Restrictions upon sexual life are unavoidable if this object is to be attained. But we cannot see the necessity that forces culture along this path and gives rise to its antagonism to sexuality. It must be due to some disturbing influence not yet detected by us.

We may find the clue in one of the so-called ideal standards of civilized society. It runs: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. It is world-renowned, undoubtedly older than Christianity which parades it as its proudest profession, yet certainly not very old; in historical times men still knew nothing of it. We will adopt a naïve attitude towards it, as if we were meeting it for the first time. Thereupon we find

ourselves unable to suppress a feeling of astonishment, as at something unnatural. Why should we do this? What good is it to us? Above all, how can we do such a thing? How could it possibly be done? My love seems to me a valuable thing that I have no right to throw away without reflection. It imposes obligations on me which I must be prepared to make sacrifices to fulfil. If I love someone, he must be worthy of it in some way or other. . . . But if he is a stranger to me and cannot attract me by any value he has in himself or any significance he may have already acquired in my emotional life, it will be hard for me to love him. I shall even be doing wrong if I do, for my love is valued as a privilege by all those belonging to me; it is an injustice to them if I put a stranger on a level with them. . . . If the high-sounding ordinance had run, 'Love thy neighbour as thy neighbour loves thee', I should not take objection to it. And there is a second commandment that seems to me even more incomprehensible, and arouses still stronger opposition in me. It is: 'Love thine enemies'. When I think it over, however, I am wrong in treating it as a greater imposition. It is at bottom the same thing. . . .

[The truth is] that men are not gentle, friendly creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves if they are attacked, but that a powerful measure of desire for aggression has to be reckoned as part of their instinctual endowment. The result is that their neighbour is to them not only a possible helper or sexual object, but also a temptation to them to gratify their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without recompense, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to

torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus*; who has the courage to dispute it in the face of all the evidence in his own life and in history? This aggressive cruelty usually lies in wait for some provocation, or else it steps into the service of some other purpose, the aim of which might as well have been achieved by milder measures. In circumstances that favour it, when those forces in the mind which ordinarily inhibit it cease to operate, it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals men as savage beasts to whom the thought of sparing their own kind is alien. . . .

The existence of this tendency to aggression which we can detect in ourselves and rightly presume to be present in others is the factor that disturbs our relations with our neighbours and makes it necessary for culture to institute its high demands. Civilized society is perpetually menaced with disintegration through this primary hostility of men towards one another. Their interests in their common work would not hold them together; the passions of instinct are stronger than reasoned interests. Culture has to call up every possible reinforcement in order to erect barriers against the aggressive instincts of men and hold their manifestations in check by reaction-formations in men's minds. Hence its system of methods by which mankind is to be driven to identifications and aim-inhibited love-relationships; hence the restrictions on sexual life; and hence, too, its ideal command to love one's neighbour as oneself, which is really justified by the fact that nothing is so completely at variance with original human nature as this. . . .

Men clearly do not find it easy to do without satisfaction of this tendency to aggression that is in

them; when deprived of satisfaction of it they are ill at ease. . . . If civilization requires sacrifices, not only of sexuality but also of the aggressive tendencies in mankind, we can better understand why it should be so hard for men to feel happy in it. . . .

## VI

Never before in any of my previous writings have I had the feeling so strongly as I have now that what I am describing is common knowledge, that I am requisitioning paper and ink, and in due course the labour of compositors and printers, in order to expound things that in themselves are obvious. For this reason, if it should appear that the recognition of a special independent instinct of aggression would entail a modification of the psycho-analytical theory of instincts, I should be glad enough to seize upon the idea.

We shall see that this is not so, that it is merely a matter of coming to closer quarters with a conclusion to which we long ago committed ourselves and following it out to its logical consequences. The whole of analytic theory has evolved gradually enough, but the theory of instincts has groped its way forward under greater difficulties than any other part of it. And yet a theory of instincts was so indispensable for the rest that something had to be adopted in place of it. In my utter perplexity at the beginning, I took as my starting-point the poet-philosopher Schiller's aphorism, that hunger and love make the world go round. Hunger would serve to represent those instincts which aim at preservation of the individual; love seeks for objects ; its chief function, which is favoured in every

way by nature, is preservation of the species. Thus first arose the contrast between ego instincts and object instincts. For the energy of the latter instincts and exclusively for them I introduced the term libido; an antithesis was thus formed between the ego instincts and the libidinal instincts directed towards objects, i.e. love in its widest sense. One of these object instincts, the sadistic, certainly stood out from the rest in that its aim was so very unloving; moreover, it clearly allied itself in many of its aspects with the ego instincts, and its close kinship with instincts of mastery without any libidinal purpose could not be concealed, but these ambiguities could be overcome; in spite of them, sadism plainly belonged to sexual life—the game of cruelty could take the place of the game of love. . . .

Every analyst will admit that none of this even now reads like a statement long since recognized as erroneous. All the same, modifications had to be made as our researches advanced from the repressed to the repressing, from the object instincts to the ego. A cardinal point in this advance was the introduction of the concept of narcissism,<sup>1</sup> i.e. the idea that libido cathects the ego itself, that its first dwelling-place was in the ego, and that the latter remains to some extent its permanent headquarters. This narcissistic libido turns in the direction of objects, thus becoming object-libido, and can transform itself back into narcissistic libido. . . . Since the ego-instincts were found to be libidinal as well, it seemed for a time inevitable that libido should become synonymous with instinctual energy in general, as C. G. Jung had

<sup>1</sup> [See Freud: 'On Narcissism: an Introduction' (1914), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). —Edr.]

previously advocated. Yet there still remained in me a kind of conviction, for which as yet there were no grounds, that the instincts could not all be of the same nature.

I made the next step in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), when the repetition-compulsion and the conservative character of instinctual life first struck me. On the basis of speculations concerning the origin of life and of biological parallels, I drew the conclusion that, beside the instinct preserving the organic substance and binding it into ever larger units, there must exist another in antithesis to this, which would seek to dissolve these units and reinstate their antecedent inorganic state; that is to say, a death instinct as well as Eros; the phenomena of life would then be explicable from the interplay of the two and their counteracting effects on each other. It was not easy, however, to demonstrate the working of this hypothetical death instinct. . . . The idea that part of the instinct became directed towards the outer world and then showed itself as an instinct of aggression and destruction carried us a step further.

. . . Conversely, any cessation of this flow outwards must have the effect of intensifying the self-destruction which in any case would always be going on within. From this example one could then surmise that the two kinds of instincts seldom—perhaps never—appear in isolation, but always mingle with each other in different, very varying proportions, and so make themselves unrecognizable to us. Sadism, long since known to us as a component-instinct of sexuality, would represent a particularly strong admixture of the instinct of destruction into the love impulse; while its counterpart, masochism, would be an alliance between sexuality and the

destruction at work within the self, in consequence of which the otherwise imperceptible destructive trend became directly evident and palpable. . . .

The conceptions I have summarized here I first put forward only tentatively, but in the course of time they have won such a hold over me that I can no longer think in any other way. To my mind they are theoretically far more fruitful than any others it is possible to employ; they provide us with that simplification, without either ignoring or doing violence to the facts, which is what we strive after in scientific work. . . . I can remember my own defensive attitude when the idea of an instinct of destruction first made its appearance in psycho-analytical literature and how long it took until I became accessible to it. That others should have shown the same resistance, and still show it, surprises me less. . . .

In all that follows I take up the standpoint that the tendency to aggression is an innate, independent instinctual disposition in man, and I come back now to the statement that it constitutes the most powerful obstacle to culture. At one point in the course of this discussion the idea took possession of us that culture was a peculiar process passing over human life and we are still under the influence of this idea. We may add to this that the process proves to be in the service of Eros, which aims at binding together single human individuals, then families, then tribes, races, nations, into one great unity, that of humanity. Why this has to be done we do not know; it is simply the work of Eros. These masses of men must be bound to one another libidinally; necessity alone, the advantages of common work, would not hold them together. The natural instinct of aggressiveness

in man, the hostility of each one against all and of all against each one, opposes this programme of civilization. This instinct of aggression is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct we have found alongside of Eros, sharing his rule over the earth. And now, it seems to me, the meaning of the evolution of culture is no longer a riddle to us. It must present to us the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instincts of life and the instincts of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of and so the evolution of civilization may be simply described as the struggle of the human species for existence. . . .

## VII

Why do the animals, kin to ourselves, not manifest any such cultural struggle? Oh, we don't know. Very probably certain of them, bees, ants, termites, had to strive for thousands of centuries before they found the way to those state institutions, that division of functions, those restrictions upon individuals, which we admire them for to-day. It is characteristic of our present state that we know by our own feelings that we should not think ourselves happy in any of these communities of the animal world, or in any of the rôles they delegate to individuals. With other animal species it may be that a temporary deadlock has been reached between the influences of their environment and the instincts contending within them, so that a cessation of development has taken place. In primitive man a fresh access of libido may have kindled a new spurt of energy on the part of the instinct of destruction.

There are a great many questions in all this to which as yet we have no answer.

Another question concerns us more closely now. What means does civilization make use of to hold in check the aggressiveness that opposes it, to make it harmless, perhaps to get rid of it? . . . What happens in [the individual] to render his craving for aggression innocuous? Something very curious, that we should never have guessed and that yet seems simple enough. The aggressiveness is introjected, 'internalized'; in fact, it is sent back where it came from, i.e. directed against the ego. It is there taken over by a part of the ego that distinguishes itself from the rest as a super-ego,<sup>1</sup> and now, in the form of 'conscience', exercises the same propensity to harsh aggressiveness against the ego that the ego would have liked to enjoy against others. The tension between the strict super-ego and the subordinate ego we call the sense of guilt; it manifests itself as the need for punishment. Civilization therefore obtains the mastery over the dangerous love of aggression in individuals by enfeebling and disarming it and setting up an institution within their minds to keep watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.

As to the origin of the sense of guilt, analysts have different views from those of the psychologists; nor is it easy for analysts to explain it either. First of all, when one asks how a sense of guilt arises in anyone, one is told something one cannot dispute: people feel guilty (pious people call it 'sinful') when they

<sup>1</sup> [For the development of this concept see Freud: 'On Narcissism: An Introduction' (1914), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923).—Edr.]

have done something they know to be 'bad'. But then one sees how little this answer tells one. Perhaps after some hesitation one will add that a person who has not actually committed a bad act, but has merely become aware of the intention to do so, can also hold himself guilty; and then one will ask why in this case the intention is counted as equivalent to the deed. In both cases, however, one is presupposing that wickedness has already been recognized as reprehensible, as something that ought not to be put into execution. How is this judgment arrived at? One may reject the suggestion of an original—as one might say, natural—capacity for discriminating between good and evil. Evil is often not at all that which would injure or endanger the ego; on the contrary, it can also be something that it desires, that would give it pleasure. An extraneous influence is evidently at work; it is this that decides what is to be called good and bad. Since their own feelings would not have led men along the same path, they must have had a motive for obeying this extraneous influence. It is easy to discover this motive in man's helplessness and dependence upon others; it can best be designated the dread of losing love. If he loses the love of others on whom he is dependent, he will forfeit also their protection against many dangers, and above all he runs the risk that this stronger person will show his superiority in the form of punishing him. What is bad is, therefore, to begin with, whatever causes one to be threatened with a loss of love; because of the dread of this loss, one must desist from it. That is why it makes little difference whether one has already committed the bad deed or only intends to do so; in either case the danger begins only when the authority has found it

out, and the latter would behave in the same way in both cases.

We call this state of mind a 'bad conscience'; but actually it does not deserve this name, for at this stage the sense of guilt is obviously only the dread of losing love, 'social' anxiety. In a little child it can never be anything else, but in many adults too it has only changed in so far as the larger human community takes the place of the father or of both parents. Consequently such people habitually permit themselves to do any bad deed that procures them something they want, if only they are sure that no authority will discover it or make them suffer for it; their anxiety relates only to the possibility of detection. Present-day society has to take into account the prevalence of this state of mind.

A great change takes place as soon as the authority has been internalized by the development of a super-ego. The manifestations of conscience are then raised to a new level; to be accurate, one should not call them conscience and sense of guilt before this.<sup>1</sup> At this point the dread of discovery ceases to operate and also once for all any difference between doing evil and wishing to do it, since nothing is hidden from the super-ego, not even thoughts. . . .

At this second stage of development, conscience exhibits a peculiarity which was absent in the first

<sup>1</sup> Every reasonable person will understand and take into account that in this descriptive survey things that in reality occur by gradual transitions are sharply differentiated and that the mere existence of a super-ego is not the only factor concerned, but also its relative strength and sphere of influence. All that has been said above in regard to conscience and guilt, moreover, is common knowledge and practically undisputed.

and is not very easy to account for. That is, the more righteous a man is the stricter and more suspicious will his conscience be, so that ultimately it is precisely those people who have carried holiness farthest who reproach themselves with the deepest sinfulness. This means that virtue forfeits some of her promised reward; the submissive and abstemious ego does not enjoy the trust and confidence of its mentor, and, as it seems, strives in vain to earn it. . . .

The field of ethics is rich in problems, and another of the facts we find here is that misfortune, i.e. external deprivation, greatly intensifies the strength of conscience in the super-ego. As long as things go well with a man, his conscience is lenient and lets the ego do all kinds of things; when some calamity befalls, he holds an inquisition within, discovers his sin, heightens the standards of his conscience, imposes abstinences on himself and punishes himself with penances. Whole peoples have acted in this way and still do so. But this is easily explained from the original infantile stage of conscience which, as we thus see, is not abandoned after the introjection into the super-ego, but persists alongside and behind the latter. Fate is felt to be a substitute for the agency of the parents: adversity means that one is no longer loved by this highest power of all, and, threatened by this loss of love, one humbles oneself again before the representative of the parents in the super-ego, which in happier days one had tried to disregard. . . . It is curious how differently a savage behaves! If he has had bad fortune, he does not throw the blame on himself, but on his fetish, who has plainly not done his duty by him, and he belabours it instead of punishing himself.

Hence we know of two sources for feelings of guilt:

that arising from the dread of authority and the later one from the dread of the super-ego. The first one compels us to renounce instinctual gratification; the other presses over and above this towards punishment, since the persistence of forbidden wishes cannot be concealed from the super-ego. We have also heard how the severity of the super-ego, the rigour of conscience, is to be explained. It simply carries on the severity of external authority which it has succeeded and to some extent replaced. We see now how renunciation of instinctual gratification is related to the sense of guilt. Originally, it is true, renunciation is the consequence of a dread of external authority; one gives up pleasures so as not to lose its love. Having made this renunciation, one is quits with authority, so to speak; no feeling of guilt should remain. But with the dread of the super-ego the case is different. Renunciation of gratification does not suffice here, for the wish persists and is not capable of being hidden from the super-ego. In spite of the renunciations made, feelings of guilt will be experienced, and this is a great disadvantage economically of the erection of the super-ego, or, as one may say, of the formation of conscience. Renunciation no longer has a completely absolving effect; virtuous restraint is no longer rewarded by the assurance of love; a threatened external unhappiness—loss of love and punishment meted out by external authority—has been exchanged for a lasting inner unhappiness, the tension of a sense of guilt.

These interrelations are so complicated and at the same time so important that, in spite of the dangers of repetition, I will consider them again from another angle. The chronological sequence would thus be as follows: first, instinct-renunciation due to dread

of an aggression by external authority—this is, of course, tantamount to the dread of loss of love, for love is a protection against these punitive aggressions. Then follows the erection of an internal authority, and instinctual renunciation due to dread of it—that is, dread of conscience. In the second case, there is the equivalence of wicked acts and wicked intentions; hence comes the sense of guilt, the need for punishment. The aggressiveness of conscience carries on the aggressiveness of authority. Thus far all seems to be clear; but how can we find a place in this scheme for the effect produced by misfortune (i.e. renunciations externally imposed), for the effect it has of increasing the rigour of conscience? how account for the exceptional stringency of conscience in the best men, those least given to rebel against it? . . . And here at last comes in an idea which is quite peculiar to psycho-analysis and alien to ordinary ways of thinking. Its nature enables us to understand why the whole matter necessarily seemed so confused and obscure to us. It tells us this: in the beginning conscience (more correctly, the anxiety which later became conscience) was the cause of instinctual renunciation, but later this relation is reversed. Every renunciation then becomes a dynamic fount of conscience; every fresh abandonment of gratification increases its severity and intolerance; and if we could only bring it better into harmony with what we already know about the development of conscience, we should be tempted to make the following paradoxical statement: Conscience is the result of instinctual renunciation, or: Renunciation (externally imposed) gives rise to conscience, which then demands further renunciations.

The contradiction between this proposition and our previous knowledge about the genesis of conscience is not in actual fact so very great, and we can see a way in which it can be still further reduced. In order to state the problem more easily, let us select the example of the instinct of aggression, and let us suppose that the renunciation in question is always a renunciation of aggression. This is, of course, merely a provisional assumption. The effect of instinctual renunciation on conscience then operates as follows: every impulse of aggression which we omit to gratify is taken over by the super-ego and goes to heighten its aggressiveness (against the ego). It does not fit in well with this that the original aggressiveness of conscience should represent a continuance of the rigour of external authority, and so have nothing to do with renunciation. But we can get rid of this discrepancy if we presume a different origin for the first quantum of aggressiveness with which the super-ego was endowed. When authority prevented the child from enjoying the first but most important gratifications of all, aggressive impulses of considerable intensity must have been evoked in it, irrespective of the particular nature of the instinctual deprivations concerned. The child must necessarily have had to give up the satisfaction of these revengeful aggressive wishes. In this situation, in which it is economically so hard pressed, it has recourse to certain mechanisms well known to us; by the process of identification it absorbs into itself the invulnerable authority, which then becomes the super-ego and comes into possession of all the aggressiveness which the child would gladly have exercised against it. The child's ego has to content itself with the unhappy role of the authority—the

father—who has been thus degraded. It is, as so often, a reversal of the original situation, ‘If I were father and you my child, I would treat *you* badly’. The relation between super-ego and ego is a reproduction, distorted by a wish, of the real relations between the ego, before it was subdivided, and an external object. That is also typical. The essential difference, however, is that the original severity of the super-ego does not—or not so much—represent the severity which has been experienced or anticipated from the object, but expresses the child’s own aggressiveness towards the latter. . . .

Experience has shown that the severity which a child’s super-ego develops in no way corresponds to the severity of the treatment it has itself experienced.<sup>1</sup> It seems to be independent of the latter; a child which has been very leniently treated can acquire a very strict conscience. But it would also be wrong to exaggerate this independence; it is not difficult to assure oneself that strict upbringing also has a strong influence on the formation of a child’s super-ego. It comes to this, that the formation of the super-ego and the development of conscience are determined in part by innate constitutional factors and in part by the influence of the actual environment; and that is in no way surprising —on the contrary, it is the invariable ætiological condition of all such processes.

It may also be said that when a child reacts to the first great instinctual deprivations with an excessive aggressiveness and a corresponding strictness of its super-ego, it is thereby following a phylogenetic prototype, unheedful of what reaction would

<sup>1</sup> As has rightly been emphasized by Melanie Klein and other English writers.

in reality be justified; for the father of primitive times was certainly terrifying, and one may safely attribute the utmost degree of aggressiveness to him. . . . We cannot disregard the conclusion that man's sense of guilt has its origin in the Oedipus complex and was acquired when the father was killed by the association of the brothers. At that time the aggression was not suppressed but carried out, and it is this same act of aggression whose suppression in the child we regard as the source of feelings of guilt. Now, I should not be surprised if a reader were to cry out angrily: 'So it makes no difference whether one does kill one's father or does not, one gets a feeling of guilt in either case! Here I should think one may be allowed some doubts. Either it is not true that guilt is evoked by suppressed aggressiveness or else the whole story about the father-murder is a romance, and primeval man did not kill his father any more often than people do nowadays. Besides this, if it is not a romance but a plausible piece of history, it would only be an instance of what we all expect to happen, namely, that one feels guilty because one has really done something which cannot be justified. And what we are all waiting for is for psycho-analysis to give us an explanation of this reaction, which at any rate is something that happens every day.'

This is true, and we must make good the omission. There is no great mystery about it either. When one has feelings of guilt after one has committed some crime and because of it, this feeling should more properly be called *remorse*. It relates only to the one act, and clearly it presupposes that *conscience*, the capacity for feelings of guilt, was already in existence before the deed. Remorse of this kind

can, therefore, never help us to find out the source of conscience and feelings of guilt in general. . . . Psycho-analysis is quite justified in excluding the case of a sense of guilt through remorse from this discussion, however frequently it may occur and however great its importance may be practically.

But if man's sense of guilt goes back to the murder of the father, that was undoubtedly an instance of 'remorse', and yet are we to suppose that there were no conscience and feelings of guilt before the act on that occasion? If so, where did the remorse come from then? This instance must explain to us the riddle of the sense of guilt and so make an end of our difficulties. And it will do so, as I believe. This remorse was the result of the very earliest primal ambivalence of feelings towards the father: the sons hated him, but they loved him too; after their hate against him had been satisfied by their aggressive acts, their love came to expression in their remorse about the deed, set up the super-ego by identification with the father, gave it the father's power to punish as he would have done the aggression they had performed, and created the restrictions which should prevent a repetition of the deed. And since impulses to aggressions against the father were repeated in the next generations, the feelings of guilt, too, persisted, and were further reinforced every time an aggression was suppressed anew and made over to the super-ego. At this point, it seems to me, we can at last clearly perceive the part played by love in the origin of conscience and the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt. It is not really a decisive matter whether one has killed one's father or abstained from the deed; one must

feel guilty in either case, for guilt is the expression of the conflict of ambivalence, the eternal struggle between Eros and the destructive or death instinct. This conflict is engendered as soon as man is confronted with the task of living with his fellows; as long as he knows no other form of life in common but that of the family, it must express itself in the Oedipus complex, cause the development of conscience and create the first feelings of guilt. When mankind tries to institute wider forms of communal life, the same conflict continues to arise—in forms derived from the past—and intensified so that a further reinforcement of the sense of guilt results. Since culture obeys an inner erotic impulse which bids it bind mankind into a closely knit mass, it can achieve this aim only by means of its vigilance in fomenting an ever-increasing sense of guilt. That which began in relation to the father ends in relation to the community. If civilization is an inevitable course of development from the group of the family to the group of humanity as a whole, then an intensification of the sense of guilt—resulting from the innate conflict of ambivalence, from the eternal struggle between the love and the death trends—will be inextricably bound up with it, until perhaps the sense of guilt may swell to a magnitude that individuals can hardly support. . . .

## VIII

On reaching the end of such a journey as this, the author must beg his readers to pardon him for not having been a more skilful guide, not sparing them bleak stretches of country at times and laborious detours at others. There is no doubt that it could

have been done better. I will now try to make some amends.

First of all, I suspect the reader feels that the discussion about the sense of guilt oversteps its proper boundaries in this essay and takes up too much space, so that the rest of the subject-matter, which is not always closely connected with it, gets pushed on one side. This may have spoilt the composition of the work; but it faithfully corresponds to my intention to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the evolution of culture, and to convey that the price of progress in civilization is paid in forfeiting happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt. What sounds puzzling in this statement, which is the final conclusion of our whole investigation, is probably due to the quite peculiar relation—as yet completely unexplained—the sense of guilt has to our consciousness. In the common cases of remorse which we think normal it becomes clearly perceptible to consciousness; indeed, we often speak of ‘consciousness of guilt’ instead of sense of guilt. In our study of the neuroses, in which we have found invaluable clues towards an understanding of normal people, we find some very contradictory states of affairs in this respect. . . . Our patients do not believe us when we ascribe an ‘unconscious sense of guilt’ to them; in order to become even moderately intelligible to them we have to explain that the sense of guilt expresses itself in an unconscious seeking for punishment. But its connection with the form of the neurosis is not to be over-estimated; even in the obsessional neurosis there are people who are not aware of their sense of guilt or who perceive it only as a tormenting uneasiness or kind of anxiety and then not until they

are prevented from carrying out certain actions. We ought some day to be able at last to understand these things; as yet we cannot. Here perhaps is the place to remark that at bottom the sense of guilt is nothing but a topographical variety of anxiety, and that in its later phases it coincides completely with the dread of the super-ego. The relation of anxiety to consciousness, moreover, is characterized by the same extraordinary variations. Somewhere or other there is always anxiety hidden behind all symptoms; at one moment, however, it sweeps into consciousness, drowning everything else with its clamour, and at the next it secretes itself so completely that we are forced to speak of unconscious anxiety—or if we want to have a cleaner conscience psychologically, since anxiety is after all only a perception—of possibilities of anxiety. Consequently it is very likely that the sense of guilt produced by culture is not perceived as such and remains to a great extent unconscious, or comes to expression as a sort of uneasiness or discontent for which other motivations are sought. The different religions at any rate have never overlooked the part played by the sense of guilt in civilization. What is more, they come forward with a claim (which I did not consider elsewhere)<sup>1</sup> to save mankind from this sense of guilt, which they call sin. We indeed have drawn our conclusions, from the way in which in Christianity this salvation is won—the sacrificial death of one who therewith takes the whole of the common guilt of all upon himself—about the occasion on which this primal sense of guilt was first acquired, that is, the occasion which was also the inception of culture.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I mean in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927).

<sup>2</sup> *Totem and Taboo* (1913).

It will not be very important, but it may be just as well to go more precisely into the meaning of certain words like super-ego, conscience, sense of guilt, need for punishment, remorse, which we have perhaps often used too loosely and in place of one another. They all relate to the same situation, but they denote different aspects of it. The super-ego is an agency or institution in the mind whose existence we have inferred: conscience is a function we ascribe, among others, to the super-ego; it consists of watching over and judging the actions and intentions of the ego, exercising the functions of a censor. The sense of guilt, the severity of the super-ego, is therefore the same thing as the rigour of conscience; it is the perception the ego has that it is watched in this way, the ego's appreciation of the tension between its strivings and the standards of the super-ego; and the anxiety that lies behind all these relations, the dread of that critical institution, the need for punishment, is an instinctual manifestation on the part of the ego, which has become masochistic under the influence of the sadistic super-ego, i.e. which has brought a part of the instinct of destruction at work within itself into the service of an erotic attachment to the super-ego. . . . It is because the two different versions of the sense of guilt—one arising from dread of the external and the other from dread of the inner authority—are superimposed one on the other that our insight into the relations of conscience has been hampered in so many ways. Remorse is a general term denoting the ego's reaction under a special form of the sense of guilt; it includes the almost unaltered sensory material belonging to the anxiety that is at work behind the sense of guilt; it is itself a

punishment and may include the need for punishment; it too, therefore, may occur before conscience has developed. . . .

This, I think, is the place to suggest that a proposal which I previously put forward as a provisional assumption should be taken in earnest. In the latest analytical literature<sup>1</sup> a predilection has been shown for the view that any kind of privation, any thwarted instinctual gratification, results in a heightening of the sense of guilt, or may do so. I believe one obtains a great simplification of theory if one regards this as valid *only* for the aggressive instincts, and that little will be found to contradict this assumption. How then is it to be explained dynamically and economically that a heightening of the sense of guilt should appear in place of an unfulfilled erotic desire? This can surely only happen in a roundabout way: the thwarting of the erotic gratification provokes an access of aggressiveness against the person who interfered with the gratification, and then this tendency to aggression in its turn has itself to be suppressed. So then it is, after all, only the aggression which is changed into guilt, by being suppressed and made over to the super-ego. I am convinced that very many processes will admit of much simpler and clearer explanation if we restrict the findings of psycho-analysis in respect of the origin of the sense of guilt to the aggressive instincts. . . . The symptoms of neurosis, as we have learnt, are essentially substitutive gratifications for unfulfilled sexual wishes. In the course of our analytic work we have found to our surprise that perhaps

<sup>1</sup> In particular, in contributions by Ernest Jones, Susan Isaacs, Melanie Klein; also, as I understand, in those of Reik and Alexander.

every neurosis masks a certain amount of unconscious sense of guilt, which in its turn reinforces the symptoms by exploiting them as punishment. One is now inclined to suggest the following statement as a possible formulation: when an instinctual trend undergoes repression, its libidinal elements are transformed into symptoms and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt. Even if this statement is only accurate as an approximation it merits our interest.

Some readers of this essay, too, may be under the impression that the formula of the struggle between Eros and the death instinct has been reiterated too often. It is supposed to characterize the cultural process which evolves in humanity; but it has been related also to the development of the individual, and besides this, is supposed to have revealed the secret of organic life in general. It becomes necessary for us to examine the relation of these three processes to one another. Now, the repetition of the same formula is vindicated by the consideration that the cultural processes both in humanity and in the development of an individual are life-processes; consequently they must both partake of the most universal characteristic of life. On the other hand, evidence of the presence of this universal characteristic does not help us to discriminate, unless it is further narrowed down by special qualifications. We can therefore set our minds at rest only if we say that the cultural process is the particular modification undergone by the life-process under the influence of the task set before it by Eros and stimulated by Ananke, external necessity; and this task is that of uniting single human beings into a larger unity with libidinal attachments between them. When, however, we compare the cultural process in humanity

with the process of development or upbringing in an individual human being, we shall conclude without much hesitation that the two are very similar in nature, if not in fact the same process applied to a different kind of object. The civilizing process in the human species is naturally more of an abstraction than the development of an individual, and therefore harder to apprehend in concrete terms, nor should the discovery of analogies be pushed to extremes; but in view of the similar character of the aims of the two processes—in one the incorporation of an individual as a member of a group and in the other the creation of a single group out of many individuals—the similarity of the means employed and of the results obtained in the two cases is not surprising. In view of its exceptional importance, we must no longer postpone mention of one feature differentiating the two processes. The development of the individual is ordered according to the programme laid down by the pleasure-principle, namely, the attainment of happiness, and to this main objective it holds firmly; the incorporation of the individual as a member of a community, or his adaptation to it, seems like an almost unavoidable condition which has to be filled before he can attain this objective of happiness. If he could achieve it without fulfilling this condition it would perhaps be better. To express it differently, we may say: individual development seems to us a product of the interplay of two trends, the striving for happiness, generally called 'egoistic', and the impulse towards merging with others in the community, which we call 'altruistic'. Neither of these descriptions goes far beneath the surface. In individual development, as we have said, the main accent falls

on the egoistic trend, the striving for happiness; while the other tendency, which may be called the 'cultural' one, usually contents itself with instituting restrictions. But things are different in the development of culture: here far the most important aim is that of creating a single unity out of individual men and women, while the objective of happiness, though still present, is pushed into the background; it almost seems as if humanity could be most successfully united into one great whole if there were no need to trouble about the happiness of individuals. The process of development in individuals must therefore be admitted to have its special features which are not repeated in the cultural evolution of humanity; the two processes only necessarily coincide in so far as the first also includes the aim of incorporation into the community.

Just as a planet circles round its central body while at the same time rotating on its own axis, so the individual man takes his part in the course of humanity's development as he goes on his way through life. But to our dull eyes the play of forces in the heavens seems set fast in a never-varying scheme, though in organic life we can still see how the forces contend with one another and the results of the conflict change from day to day. So in every individual the two trends, one towards personal happiness and the other towards unity with the rest of humanity, must contend with each other; so must the two processes of individual and of cultural development oppose each other and dispute the ground against each other. This struggle between individual and society, however, is not derived from the antagonism of the primal instincts, Eros and Death, which are probably irreconcilable; it is a

dissension in the camp of the libido itself, comparable to the contest between the ego and its objects for a share of the libido; and it does eventually admit of a solution in the individual, as we may hope it will also do in the future of civilization—however greatly it may oppress the lives of individuals at the present time.

The analogy between the process of cultural evolution and the path of individual development may be carried further in an important respect. It can be maintained that the community, too, develops a super-ego, under whose influence cultural evolution proceeds. It would be an enticing task for an authority on human systems of culture to work out this analogy in specific cases. I will confine myself to pointing out certain striking details. The super-ego of any given epoch of civilization originates in the same way as that of an individual; it is based on the impression left behind them by great leading personalities, men of outstanding force of mind, or men in whom some one human tendency has developed in unusual strength and purity, often for that reason very disproportionately. In many instances the analogy goes still further, in that during their lives—often enough, even if not always—such persons are ridiculed by others, ill-used or even cruelly done to death, just as happened with the primal father who also rose again to become a deity long after his death by violence. The most striking example of this double fate is the figure of Jesus Christ, if indeed it does not itself belong to the realm of mythology which called it into being out of a dim memory of that primordial event. Another point of agreement is that the cultural super-ego, just like that of

an individual, sets up high ideals and standards, and that failure to fulfil them is punished by both with 'anxiety of conscience'. In this particular, indeed, we come across the remarkable circumstance that the mental processes concerned here are actually more familiar to us and more accessible to consciousness when they proceed from the group than they can be in the individual. In the latter, when tension arises, the aggressions of the super-ego voicing its noisy reproaches are all that is perceived, while its injunctions themselves often remain unconscious in the background. If we bring them to the knowledge of consciousness we find that they coincide with the demands of the prevailing cultural super-ego. At this point the two processes, that of the evolution of the group and the development of the individual, are always firmly mortised together, so to speak. Consequently many of the effects and properties of the super-ego can be more easily detected through its operations in the group than in the individual.

The cultural super-ego has elaborated its ideals and erected its standards. Those of its demands which deal with the relations of human beings to one another are comprised under the name of ethics. The greatest value has at all times been set upon systems of ethics, as if men had expected them in particular to achieve something especially important. And ethics does in fact deal predominantly with the point which is easily seen to be the sorest of all in any scheme of civilization. Ethics must be regarded therefore as a therapeutic effort: as an endeavour to achieve something through the standards imposed by the super-ego which had not been attained by the work of civilization in other ways.

We already know—it is what we have been discussing—that the question is how to dislodge the greatest obstacle to civilization, the constitutional tendency in men to aggressions against one another; and for that very reason the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself—probably the most recent of the cultural super-ego's demands—is especially interesting to us. In our investigations and our therapy of the neuroses we cannot avoid finding fault with the super-ego of the individual on two counts: in commanding and prohibiting with such severity it troubles too little about the happiness of the ego, and it fails to take into account sufficiently the difficulties in the way of obeying it—the strength of instinctual cravings in the id and the hardships of external environment. Consequently in our therapy we often find ourselves obliged to do battle with the super-ego and work to moderate its demands. Exactly the same objections can be made against the ethical standards of the cultural super-ego. It, too, does not trouble enough about the mental constitution of human beings; it enjoins a command and never asks whether or not it is possible for them to obey it. It presumes, on the contrary, that a man's ego is psychologically capable of anything that is required of it—that his ego has unlimited power over his id. This is an error; even in so-called normal people the power of controlling the id cannot be increased beyond certain limits. If one asks more of them, one produces revolt or neurosis in individuals or makes them unhappy. The command to love our neighbours as ourselves is the strongest defence there is against human aggressiveness and it is a superlative example of the unpsychological attitude of the cultural super-ego. The command is impossible

to fulfil; such an enormous inflation of love can only lower its value and not remedy the evil. Civilization pays no heed to all this; it merely prates that the harder it is to obey the more laudable the obedience. The fact remains that anyone who follows such preaching in the present state of civilization only puts himself at a disadvantage beside all those who set it at naught. What an overwhelming obstacle to civilization aggression must be if the defence against it can cause as much misery as aggression itself! 'Natural' ethics, as it is called, has nothing to offer here beyond the narcissistic satisfaction of thinking oneself better than others. The variety of ethics that links itself with religion brings in at this point its promises of a better future life. I should imagine that as long as virtue is not rewarded in this life ethics will preach in vain. I too think it unquestionable that an actual change in men's attitude to property would be of more help in this direction than any ethical commands; but among the Socialists this proposal is obscured by new idealistic expectations disregarding human nature, which detract from its value in actual practice.

It seems to me that the point of view which seeks to follow the phenomena of cultural evolution as manifestations of a super-ego promises to yield still further discoveries. I am coming quickly to an end; there is, however, one question which I can hardly ignore. If the evolution of civilization has such a far-reaching similarity with the development of an individual, and if the same methods are employed in both, would not the diagnosis be justified that many systems of civilization—or epochs of it—possibly even the whole of humanity—have become 'neurotic' under the pressure of the civilizing

trends? To analytic dissection of these neuroses therapeutic recommendations might follow which could claim a great practical interest. I would not say that such an attempt to apply psycho-analysis to civilized society would be fanciful or doomed to fruitlessness. But it behoves us to be very careful, not to forget that after all we are dealing only with analogies, and that it is dangerous, not only with men but also with concepts, to drag them out of the region where they originated and have matured. The diagnosis of collective neuroses, moreover, will be confronted by a special difficulty. In the neurosis of an individual we can use as a starting-point the contrast presented to us between the patient and his environment which we assume to be 'normal'. No such background as this would be available for any society similarly affected; it would have to be supplied in some other way. And with regard to any therapeutic application of our knowledge, what would be the use of the most acute analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses power to compel the community to adopt the therapy? In spite of all these difficulties, we may expect that one day someone will venture upon this research into the pathology of civilized communities.

For various reasons, it is very far from my intention to express any opinion concerning the value of human civilization. I have endeavoured to guard myself against the enthusiastic partiality which believes our civilization to be the most precious thing that we possess or could acquire, and thinks it must inevitably lead us to undreamt-of heights of perfection. I can at any rate listen without taking umbrage to those critics who aver that when one surveys the aims of civilization and the means it

employs, one is bound to conclude that the whole thing is not worth the effort and that in the end it can only produce a state of things which no individual will be able to bear. My impartiality is all the easier to me since I know very little about these things and am sure only of one thing, that the judgments of value made by mankind are immediately determined by their desires for happiness; in other words, that those judgments are attempts to prop up their illusions with arguments. I could understand it very well if anyone were to point to the inevitable nature of the process of cultural development and say, for instance, that the tendency to institute restrictions upon sexual life or to carry humanitarian ideals into effect at the cost of natural selection is a developmental trend which it is impossible to avert or divert, and to which it is best for us to submit as though they were natural necessities. I know, too, the objection that can be raised against this: that tendencies such as these, which are believed to have insuperable power behind them, have often in the history of man been thrown aside and replaced by others. My courage fails me, therefore, at the thought of rising up as a prophet before my fellow-men, and I bow to their reproach that I have no consolation to offer them; for at bottom this is what they all demand—the frenzied revolutionary as passionately as the most pious believer.

The fateful question of the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent the cultural process developed in it will succeed in mastering the derangements of communal life caused by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. In this connection, perhaps the phase through which we are at this moment passing deserves

special interest. Men have brought their powers of subduing the forces of nature to such a pitch that by using them they could now very easily exterminate one another to the last man. They know this—hence arises a great part of their current unrest, their dejection, their mood of apprehension. And now it may be expected that the other of the two ‘heavenly forces’, eternal Eros, will put forth his strength so as to maintain himself alongside of his equally immortal adversary.

## WHY WAR ?<sup>1</sup>

*In the summer of 1932 the League of Nations International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation proposed that Professor Einstein should invite a person, chosen by himself, to a frank exchange of views on any problem which Professor Einstein might select. The problem chosen was: Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war?*

*Professor Freud's answer to the points raised in Professor Einstein's letter is given below, and my thanks and acknowledgments are due to the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation for its permission to print Prof. Freud's letter here.—Edr.*

VIENNA

SEPTEMBER 1932.

DEAR PROFESSOR EINSTEIN,

When I learnt of your intention to invite me to a mutual exchange of views upon a subject which not only interested you personally but seemed deserving, too, of public interest, I cordially assented. I expected you to choose a problem lying on the borderland of the knowable, as it stands to-day, a theme which each of us, physicist and psychologist, might approach from his own angle, to meet at last

<sup>1</sup> Paris: League of Nations International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, 1933. *Open Letters Series*, Vol. II. Unpublished correspondence between MM. Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. Translated from the original German by Stuart Gilbert.

on common ground, though setting out from different premises. Thus the question which you put me—what is to be done to rid mankind of the war-menace?—took me by surprise. And, next, I was dumbfounded by the thought of my (of *our*, I almost wrote) incompetence; for this struck me as being a matter of practical politics, the statesman's proper study. But then I realized that you did not raise the question in your capacity of scientist or physicist, but as a lover of his fellow-men, who responded to the call of the League of Nations much as Fridtjof Nansen, the Polar explorer, took on himself the task of succouring homeless and starving victims of the World War. And, next, I reminded myself that I was not being called on to formulate practical proposals, but, rather, to explain how this question of preventing wars strikes a psychologist.

But here, too, you have stated the gist of the matter in your letter—and taken the wind out of my sails! Still, I will gladly follow in your wake and content myself with endorsing your conclusions, which, however, I propose to amplify to the best of my knowledge or surmise.

You begin with the relations between Might and Right, and this is assuredly the proper starting-point for our inquiry. But, for the term 'might', I would substitute a tougher and more telling word: 'violence'. In right and violence we have to-day an obvious antinomy. It is easy to prove that one has evolved from the other and, when we go back to origins and examine primitive conditions, the solution of the problem follows easily enough. I must crave your indulgence if in what follows I speak of well-known, admitted facts as though they were new data; the context necessitates this method.

Conflicts of interest between man and man are resolved, in principle, by the recourse to violence. It is the same in the animal kingdom, from which man cannot claim exclusion; nevertheless men are also prone to conflicts of opinion, touching, on occasion, the loftiest peaks of abstract thought, which seem to call for settlement by quite another method. This refinement is, however, a late development. To start with, brute force was the factor which, in small communities, decided points of ownership and the question which man's will was to prevail. Very soon physical force was implemented, then replaced, by the use of various adjuncts; he proved the victor whose weapon was the better, or handled the more skilfully. Now, for the first time, with the coming of weapons, superior brains began to oust brute force, but the object of the conflict remained the same: one party was to be constrained, by the injury done him or impairment of his strength, to retract a claim or a refusal. This end is most effectively gained when the opponent is definitively put out of action—in other words, is killed. This procedure has two advantages; the enemy cannot renew hostilities, and, secondly, his fate deters others from following his example. Moreover, the slaughter of a foe gratifies an instinctive craving—a point to which we shall revert hereafter. However, another consideration may be set off against this will to kill: the possibility of using an enemy for servile tasks if his spirit be broken and his life spared. Here violence finds an outlet not in slaughter but in subjugation. Hence springs the practice of giving quarter; but the victor, having from now on to reckon with the craving for revenge that rankles in his victim, forfeits to some extent his personal security.

Thus, under primitive conditions, it is superior force—brute violence, or violence backed by arms—that lords it everywhere. We know that in the course of evolution this state of things was modified, a path was traced that led away from violence to law. But what was this path? Surely it issued from a single verity; that the superiority of one strong man can be overborne by an alliance of many weaklings, that *l'union fait la force*. Brute force is overcome by union, the allied might of scattered units makes good its right against the isolated giant. Thus we may define 'right' (i.e. law) as the might of a community. Yet it, too, is nothing else than violence, quick to attack whatever individual stands in its path, and it employs the selfsame methods, follows like ends, with but one difference; it is the communal, not individual, violence that has its way. But, for the transition from crude violence to the reign of law, a certain psychological condition must first obtain. The union of the majority must be stable and enduring. If its sole *raison d'être* be the discomfiture of some overweening individual and, after his downfall, it be dissolved, it leads to nothing. Some other man, trusting to his superior power, will seek to reinstate the rule of violence and the cycle will repeat itself unendingly. Thus the union of the people must be permanent and well organised; it must enact rules to meet the risk of possible revolts; must set up machinery ensuring that its rules—the laws—are observed and that such acts of violence as the laws demand are duly carried out. This recognition of a community of interests engenders among the members of the group a sentiment of unity and fraternal solidarity which constitutes its real strength.

So far I have set out what seems to me the kernel

of the matter: the suppression of brute force by the transfer of power to a larger combination, founded on the community of sentiments linking up its members. All the rest is mere tautology and glosses. Now the position is simple enough so long as the community consists of a number of equipollent individuals. The laws of such a group can determine to what extent the individual must forfeit his personal freedom, the right of using personal force as an instrument of violence, to ensure the safety of the group. But such a combination is only theoretically possible; in practice the situation is always complicated by the fact that, from the outset, the group includes elements of unequal power, men and women, elders and children, and, very soon, as a result of war and conquest, victors and the vanquished—i.e. masters and slaves—as well. From this time on the common law takes notice of these inequalities of power, laws are made by and for the rulers, giving the servile classes fewer rights. Thenceforward there exist within the state two factors making for legal instability, but legislative evolution, too: first, the attempts by members of the ruling class to set themselves above the law's restrictions and, secondly, the constant struggle of the ruled to extend their rights and see each gain embodied in the code, replacing legal disabilities by equal laws for all. The second of these tendencies will be particularly marked when there takes place a positive mutation of the balance of power within the community, the frequent outcome of certain historical conditions. In such cases the laws may gradually be adjusted to the changed conditions or (as more usually ensues) the ruling class is loath to reckon with the new developments, the result being insurrections and

civil wars, a period when law is in abeyance and force once more the arbiter, followed by a new régime of law. There is another factor of constitutional change, which operates in a wholly pacific manner, namely: the cultural evolution of the mass of the community; this factor, however, is of a different order and can only be dealt with later.

Thus we see that, even within the group itself, the exercise of violence cannot be avoided when conflicting interests are at stake. But the common needs and habits of men who live in fellowship under the same sky favour a speedy issue of such conflicts and, this being so, the possibilities of peaceful solutions make steady progress. Yet the most casual glance at world-history will show an unending series of conflicts between one community and another or a group of others, between large and smaller units, between cities, countries, races, tribes and kingdoms, almost all of which were settled by the ordeal of war. Such wars end either in pillage or in conquest and its fruits, the downfall of the loser. No single all-embracing judgment can be passed on these wars of aggrandizement. Some, like the war between the Mongols and the Turks, have led to unmitigated misery; others, however, have furthered the transition from violence to law, since they brought larger units into being, within whose limits a recourse to violence was banned and a new régime determined all disputes. Thus the Roman conquests brought that boon, the *pax romana*, to the Mediterranean lands. The French kings' lust for aggrandizement created a new France, flourishing in peace and unity. Paradoxical as it sounds, we must admit that warfare well might serve to pave the way to that unbroken peace we so desire, for it is war that brings

vast empires into being, within whose frontiers all warfare is proscribed by a strong central power. In practice, however, this end is not attained, for as a rule the fruits of victory are but short-lived, the new-created unit falls asunder once again, generally because there can be no true cohesion between the parts that violence has welded. Hitherto, moreover, such conquests have only led to aggregations which, for all their magnitude, had limits, and disputes between these units could be resolved only by recourse to arms. For humanity at large the sole result of all these military enterprises was that, instead of frequent not to say incessant little wars, they had now to face great wars which, for all they came less often, were so much the more destructive.

Regarding the world of to-day the same conclusion holds good, and you, too, have reached it, though by a shorter path. There is but one sure way of ending war and that is the establishment, by common consent, of a central control which shall have the last word in every conflict of interests. For this, two things are needed: first, the creation of such a supreme court of judicature; secondly, its investment with adequate executive force. Unless this second requirement be fulfilled, the first is unavailing. Obviously the League of Nations, acting as a Supreme Court, fulfils the first condition; it does not fulfil the second. It has no force at its disposal and can only get it if the members of the new body, its constituent nations, furnish it. And, as things are, this is a forlorn hope. Still we should be taking a very short-sighted view of the League of Nations were we to ignore the fact that here is an experiment the like of which has rarely—never before, perhaps, on such a scale—been attempted in the course of history.

It is an attempt to acquire the authority (in other words, coercive influence), which hitherto reposed exclusively on the possession of power, by calling into play certain idealistic attitudes of mind. We have seen that there are two factors of cohesion in a community: violent compulsion and ties of sentiment (' identifications ', in technical parlance) between the members of the group. If one of these factors becomes inoperative, the other may still suffice to hold the group together. Obviously such notions as these can only be significant when they are the expression of a deeply rooted sense of unity, shared by all. It is necessary, therefore, to gauge the efficacy of such sentiments. History tells us that, on occasion, they have been effective. For example, the Panhellenic conception, the Greeks' awareness of superiority over their barbarian neighbours, which found expression in the Amphictyonies, the Oracles and Games, was strong enough to humanize the methods of warfare as between Greeks, though inevitably it failed to prevent conflicts between different elements of the Hellenic race or even to deter a city or group of cities from joining forces with their racial foe, the Persians, for the discomfiture of a rival. The solidarity of Christendom in the Renaissance age was no more effective, despite its vast authority, in hindering Christian nations, large and small alike, from calling in the Sultan to their aid. And, in our times, we look in vain for some such unifying notion whose authority would be unquestioned. It is all too clear that the nationalistic ideas, paramount to-day in every country, operate in quite a contrary direction. There are some who hold that the Bolshevik conceptions may make an end of war, but, as things are, that goal lies very far

away and, perhaps, could only be attained after a spell of brutal internecine warfare. Thus it would seem that any effort to replace brute force by the might of an ideal is, under present conditions, doomed to fail. Our logic is at fault if we ignore the fact that right is founded on brute force and even to-day needs violence to maintain it.

I now can comment on another of your statements. You are amazed that it is so easy to infect men with the war-fever, and you surmise that man has in him an active instinct for hatred and destruction, amenable to such stimulations. I entirely agree with you. I believe in the existence of this instinct and have been recently at pains to study its manifestations. In this connection may I set out a fragment of that knowledge of the instincts, which we psychoanalysts, after so many tentative essays and gropings in the dark, have compassed? We assume that human instincts are of two kinds: those that conserve and unify, which we call 'erotic' (in the meaning Plato gives to *Eros* in his *Symposium*), or else 'sexual' (explicitly extending the popular connotation of 'sex'); and, secondly, the instincts to destroy and kill, which we assimilate as the aggressive or destructive instincts. These are, as you perceive, the well-known opposites, Love and Hate, transformed into theoretical entities; they are, perhaps, another aspect of those eternal polarities, attraction and repulsion, which fall within your province. But we must be chary of passing over-hastily to the notions of good and evil. Each of these instincts is every whit as indispensable as its opposite and all the phenomena of life derive from their activity, whether they work in concert or in opposition. It seems that an instinct of either

category can operate but rarely in isolation; it is always blended ('alloyed', as we say) with a certain dosage of its opposite, which modifies its aim or even, in certain circumstances, is a prime condition of its attainment. Thus the instinct of self-preservation is certainly of an erotic nature, but to gain its ends this very instinct necessitates aggressive action. In the same way the love-instinct, when directed to a specific object, calls for an admixture of the acquisitive instinct if it is to enter into effective possession of that object. It is the difficulty of isolating the two kinds of instinct in their manifestations that has so long prevented us from recognizing them.

If you travel with me a little further on this road, you will find that human affairs are complicated in yet another way. Only exceptionally does an action follow on the stimulus of a single instinct, which is *per se* a blend of Eros and destructiveness. As a rule several motives of similar composition concur to bring about the act. This fact was duly noted by a colleague of yours, Professor G. C. Lichtenberg, sometime Professor of Physics at Göttingen; he was perhaps even more eminent as a psychologist than as a physical scientist. He evolved the notion of a 'Compass-card of Motives' and wrote: 'The efficient motives impelling man to act can be classified like the 32 Winds, and described in the same manner; for example, *Food-Food-Fame* or *Fame-Fame-Food*.' Thus, when a nation is summoned to engage in war, a whole gamut of human motives may respond to this appeal; high and low motives, some openly avowed, others slurred over. The lust for aggression and destruction is certainly included; the innumerable cruelties of history and man's daily life confirm its prevalence and strength. The

stimulation of these destructive impulses by appeals to idealism and the erotic instinct naturally facilitates their release. Musing on the atrocities recorded on history's page, we feel that the ideal motive has often served as a camouflage for the lust of destruction; sometimes, as with the cruelties of the Inquisition, it seems that, while the ideal motives occupied the foreground of consciousness, they drew their strength from the destructive instincts submerged in the unconscious. Both interpretations are feasible.

You are interested, I know, in the prevention of war, not in our theories, and I keep this fact in mind. Yet I would like to dwell a little longer on this destructive instinct which is seldom given the attention that its importance warrants. With the least of speculative efforts we are led to conclude that this instinct functions in every living being, striving to work its ruin and reduce life to its primal state of inert matter. Indeed it might well be called the 'death-instinct'; whereas the erotic instincts vouch for the struggle to live on. The death instinct becomes an impulse to destruction when, with the aid of certain organs, it directs its action outwards, against external objects. The living being, that is to say, defends its own existence by destroying foreign bodies. But, in one of its activities, the death instinct is operative *within* the living being and we have sought to trace back a number of normal and pathological phenomena to this *introversions* of the destructive instinct. We have even committed the heresy of explaining the origin of human conscience by some such 'turning inward' of the aggressive impulse. Obviously when this internal tendency operates on too large a scale, it is no trivial matter, rather a positively morbid state of things; whereas

the diversion of the destructive impulse towards the external world must have beneficial effects. Here is then the biological justification for all those vile, pernicious propensities which we now are combating. We can but own that they are really more akin to nature than this our stand against them, which, in fact, remains to be accounted for.

All this may give you the impression that our theories amount to a species of mythology and a gloomy one at that! But does not every natural science lead ultimately to this—a sort of mythology? Is it otherwise to-day with your physical science?

The upshot of these observations, as bearing on the subject in hand, is that there is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity's aggressive tendencies. In some happy corners of the earth, they say, where nature brings forth abundantly whatever man desires, there flourish races whose lives go gently by, unknowing of aggression or constraint. This I can hardly credit; I would like further details about these happy folk. The Bolsheviks, too, aspire to do away with human aggressiveness by ensuring the satisfaction of material needs and enforcing equality between man and man. To me this hope seems vain. Meanwhile they busily perfect their armaments, and their hatred of outsiders is not the least of the factors of cohesion amongst themselves. In any case, as you too have observed, complete suppression of man's aggressive tendencies is not in issue; what we may try is to divert it into a channel other than that of warfare.

From our 'mythology' of the instincts we may easily deduce a formula for an indirect method of eliminating war. If the propensity for war be due to the destructive instinct, we have always its counter-

agent, Eros, to our hand. All that produces ties of sentiment between man and man must serve us as war's antidote. These ties are of two kinds. First, such relations as those towards a beloved object, void though they be of sexual intent. The psycho-analyst need feel no compunction in mentioning 'love' in this connection; religion uses the same language: Love thy neighbour as thyself. A pious injunction easy to enounce, but hard to carry out! The other bond of sentiment is by way of identification. All that brings out the significant resemblances between men calls into play this feeling of community, identification, whereon is founded, in large measure, the whole edifice of human society.

In your strictures on the abuse of authority I find another suggestion for an indirect attack on the war-impulse. That men are divided into leaders and the led is but another manifestation of their inborn and irremediable inequality. The second class constitutes the vast majority; they need a high command to make decisions for them, to which decisions they usually bow without demur. In this context we would point out that men should be at greater pains than heretofore to form a superior class of independent thinkers, unamenable to intimidation and fervent in the quest of truth, whose function it would be to guide the masses dependent on their lead. There is no need to point out how little the rule of politicians and the Church's ban on liberty of thought encourage such a new creation. The ideal conditions would obviously be found in a community where every man subordinated his instinctive life to the dictates of reason. Nothing less than this could bring about so thorough and so durable a union between men, even if this involved the severance of mutual ties of

sentiment. But surely such a hope is utterly utopian, as things are. The other indirect methods of preventing war are certainly more feasible, but entail no quick results. They conjure up an ugly picture of mills which grind so slowly that, before the flour is ready, men are dead of hunger.

As you see, little good comes of consulting a theoretician, aloof from worldly contacts, on practical and urgent problems! Better it were to tackle each successive crisis with means that we have ready to our hands. However, I would like to deal with a question which, though it is not mooted in your letter, interests me greatly. Why do we, you and I and many another, protest so vehemently against war, instead of just accepting it as another of life's odious importunities? For it seems a natural thing enough, biologically sound and practically unavoidable. I trust you will not be shocked by my raising such a question. For the better conduct of an inquiry it may be well to don a mask of feigned aloofness. The answer to my query may run as follows: Because every man has a right over his own life and war destroys lives that were full of promise; it forces the individual into situations that shame his manhood, obliging him to murder fellow-men, against his will; it ravages material amenities, the fruits of human toil, and much besides. Moreover wars, as now conducted, afford no scope for acts of heroism according to the old ideals and, given the high perfection of modern arms, war to-day would mean the sheer extermination of one of the combatants, if not of both. This is so true, so obvious, that we can but wonder why the conduct of war is not banned by general consent. Doubtless either of the points I have just made is open to debate. It may be

asked if the community, in its turn, cannot claim a right over the individual lives of its members. Moreover, all forms of war cannot be indiscriminately condemned; so long as there are nations and empires, each prepared callously to exterminate its rival, all alike must be equipped for war. But we will not dwell on any of these problems; they lie outside the debate to which you have invited me. I pass on to another point, the basis, as it strikes me, of our common hatred of war. It is this: we cannot do otherwise than hate it. Pacifists we are, since our organic nature wills us thus to be. Hence it comes easy to us to find arguments that justify our stand-point.

This point, however, calls for elucidation. Here is the way in which I see it. The cultural development of mankind (some, I know, prefer to call it civilization) has been in progress since immemorial antiquity. To this processus we owe all that is best in our composition, but also much that makes for human suffering. Its origins and causes are obscure, its issue is uncertain, but some of its characteristics are easy to perceive. It well may lead to the extinction of mankind, for it impairs the sexual function in more than one respect, and even to-day the uncivilized races and the backward classes of all nations are multiplying more rapidly than the cultured elements. This process may, perhaps, be likened to the effect of domestication on certain animals—it clearly involves physical changes of structure—but the view that cultural development is an organic process of this order has not yet become generally familiar. The psychic changes which accompany this process of cultural change are striking, and not to be gainsaid. They consist

in the progressive rejection of instinctive ends and a scaling down of instinctive reactions. Sensations which delighted our forefathers have become neutral or unbearable to us; and, if our ethical and æsthetic ideals have undergone a change, the causes of this are ultimately organic. On the psychological side two of the most important phenomena of culture are, firstly, a strengthening of the intellect, which tends to master our instinctive life, and, secondly, an introversion of the aggressive impulse, with all its consequent benefits and perils. Now war runs most emphatically counter to the psychic disposition imposed on us by the growth of culture; we are therefore bound to resent war, to find it utterly intolerable. With pacifists like us it is not merely an intellectual and affective repulsion, but a constitutional intolerance, an idiosyncrasy in its most drastic form. And it would seem that the æsthetic ignominies of warfare play almost as large a part in this repugnance as war's atrocities.

How long have we to wait before the rest of men turn pacifist? Impossible to say, and yet perhaps our hope that these two factors—man's cultural disposition and a well-founded dread of the form that future wars will take—may serve to put an end to war in the near future, is not chimerical. But by what ways or by-ways this will come about, we cannot guess. Meanwhile we may rest on the assurance that whatever makes for cultural development is working also against war.

With kindest regards and, should this *exposé* prove a disappointment to you, my sincere regrets,

Yours,

SIGMUND FREUD.

## FREUD : LIST OF TRANSLATIONS (to July 1937)

<i>Year of Publication of the Original</i>	<i>Title of Paper in English</i>	<i>Where published in translation</i>
1893	On the psychical mechanism of hysterical phenomena (in collaboration with Josef Breuer) Some points in a comparative study of organic and hysterical paralysis	CP. I & H CP. I
1894	Charcot The defense neuro-psychoses	CP. I CP. I & H
1895	The case of Miss Lucy R. The case of Miss Elizabeth v. R. The Psychotherapy of Hysteria	H H H
	The justification for detaching from neurasthenia a particular syndrome: the anxiety neurosis	CP. I & H
	A reply to criticisms on the Anxiety Neurosis Obsessions and Phobias; their psychical mechanism and their aetiology	CP. I
1896	Further remarks on the defense neuro-psychoses Heredity and the Aetiology of the Neuroses	CP. I & H CP. I
	The Aetiology of Hysteria	CP. I
1898	Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses	CP. I
1900	The Interpretation of Dreams (London: Allen & Unwin. 1913) [Editions of the translation bearing date from 1933 onwards are to be preferred as at this date the 8th German edition was retranslated.]	CP. I & H
1901	On Dreams (London: Heinemann. 1914)	CP. I
1904	Freud's Psycho-Analytical Method The Psycho-pathology of Everyday Life (London: Fisher Unwin. 1914)	CP. I
1905	On Psychotherapy Three Contributions to the Theory of Sexuality (New York: 1910)	CP. I & H
	Wit and its relation to the Unconscious (London: Fisher Unwin: 1916)	
1906	Fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria My views on the rôle of Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses	CP. III CP. I & H

<i>Year of Publication of the Original</i>	<i>Title of Paper in English</i>	<i>Where published in translation</i>
1906	Psycho-Analysis and the Ascertaining of Truth in Courts of Law	CP. II
1907	Delusion and Dream (N.Y.: Moffat Yard. 1917; London: Allen & Unwin. 1921) Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices The Sexual Enlightenment of Children	CP. II CP. II
1908	'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness On the Sexual Theories of Children Hysterical Phantasies and their relation to Bisexuality Character and Anal Erotism	CP. II CP. II
1909	The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming General remarks on Hysterical Attacks Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy Notes upon a case of Obsessional Neurosis The Origin and Development of Psycho-Analysis [frequently referred to as 'On Psycho-Analysis: Five Lectures', or 'The Five Lectures.'] ( <i>Am. J. Psych.</i> 1910)	CP. II & H CP. II CP. IV CP. II CP. III CP. III
1910	Leonardo da Vinci: A Psycho-sexual study of an Infantile Reminiscence (N.Y.: 1916; London: Kegan Paul. 1922) The Antithetical Sense of Primal Words The future prospects of Psycho-Analytical Therapy Observations on 'wild' Psycho-Analysis Psychogenic Visual Disturbances according to Psycho-Analytical Conceptions	CP. IV CP. II & H CP. II & H
	Contributions to the Psychology of Love: A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men	CP. II
1911	Psycho-Analytical Notes upon an auto-biographical account of a case of Paranoia (dementia paranoïdes) Formulations regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning	CP. IV CP. III
1912	Types of Neurotic Nosogenesis Contributions to the Psychology of Love: the most prevalent form of Degradation in Erotic Life The employment of Dream-Interpretation in Psycho-Analysis The Dynamics of the Transference Recommendations for Physicians on the Psycho-Analytical Method	CP. IV CP. IV CP. II CP. II CP. II

<i>Year of Publication of the Original</i>	<i>Title of Paper in English</i>	<i>Where published in translation</i>
1912	A Note on the Unconscious in Psycho-Analysis. [Written (in English) at the request of the Society for Psychical Research and first published in a special Medical Supplement of their Proceedings, part lxvi, vol. XXVI.]	CP. IV
1913	Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psycho-Analysis: on beginning the treatment, the question of the first communications, the dynamics of the cure A Dream which bore Testimony The occurrence in dreams of material from fairy-tales	CP. II CP. II CP. IV
	Totem and Taboo (N.Y.: Moffat Yard. 1918). On Similarities in the Mental Life of Savages and Neurotics: I. The Dread of Incest. II. Taboo and the Ambivalence of Emotions. III. Animism, Magic and the Omnipotence of Thought. IV. The Infantile Return of Totemism	CP. II
	The Predisposition to Obsessional Neurosis	CP. II
	Infantile Mental Life: Two lies told by Children	CP. II
	Fausse Reconnaissance ('déjà raconté') in psycho-analytic treatment	CP. II
	The Theme of the Three Caskets	CP. IV
1914	On Narcissism: an Introduction	CP. IV
	The History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement	CP. I
	The Moses of Michelangelo	CP. IV
	Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psycho-Analysis: Recollection, Repetition and Working Through	CP. II
1915	Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psycho-Analysis: Observations on Transference-love	CP. II
	A case of Paranoia running counter to the psycho-analytical theory of the disease	CP. II
	Thoughts for the times on War and Death (N.Y.: Brill and Kuttner. 1918, and Moffat Yard)	CP. IV
	Instincts and their Vicissitudes	CP. IV
	Repression	CP. IV
	The Unconscious	CP. IV
	Some Character-types met with in psycho-analytic work	CP. IV

<i>Year of Publication of the Original</i>	<i>Title of Paper in English</i>	<i>Where published in translation</i>
1916	A Connection between a Symbol and a Symptom A Mythological Parallel to a Visual Obsession On the Transformation of Instincts with special reference to anal eroticism Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams	CP. II CP. IV CP. II CP. IV
1917	One of the Difficulties of Psycho-Analysis A Childhood Recollection from <i>Dichtung und Wahrheit</i> Mourning and Melancholia Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis [delivered 1915-16]. (N.Y.: 1920, London: Allen & Unwin. 1922)	CP. IV & J. I CP. IV CP. IV
1918	From the History of an Infantile Neurosis Contributions to the Psychology of Love: The Taboo of Virginity Turnings in the ways of psycho-analytic therapy	CP. III CP. IV CP. II
1919	'A child is being beaten'. A contribution to the study of the origin of sexual perversions The Uncanny	CP. II & J. I CP. IV
1920	The Psychogenesis of a case of Homosexuality in a Woman	CP. II & J. I
1921	Beyond the Pleasure Principle	LIB. 4
1922	Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego	LIB. 6
	Dreams and Telepathy	CP. IV & J. III
	Certain Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality	CP. II & J. IV
	Postscript to the Analysis of little Hans [the 5-year-old-boy case, see 1909]	CP. III
1923	The Infantile Genital Organisation of the Libido: A Supplement to the Theory of Sexuality	CP. II & J. V
	A Neurosis of Demoniacal Possession in the Seventeenth Century	CP. IV
	The Ego and the Id	LIB. 12
1924	Neurosis and Psychosis	CP. II
	The Economic Problem in Masochism	CP. II
	The Passing of the Oedipus Complex	CP. II & J. V

<i>Year of Publication of the Original</i>	<i>Title of Paper in English</i>	<i>Where published in translation</i>
1924	The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis Psycho-Analytic Exploring [written in English]. (In 'These Eventful Years'. London and N.Y.: Enc. Brit. Co. 1924)	CP. II
	An Autobiographical Study. [A translation of 'Eine Autoergographie Sigmund Freuds' and of 'Die Frage der Laienanalyse' bound in one volume was published by Brentano, N.Y., in 1927, under the title of 'The Problem of Lay Analyses'.]	
1925	Negation Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes	LIB. 26 J. VI
1926	Psychoanalysis. (London: Enc. Brit., 13th edition) Remarks on the Question of Lay Analysis The Problem of Lay Analyses	J. VIII
	Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety	
1927	Fetishism The Future of an Illusion	LIB. 28 J. IX
1928	Humour A Religious Experience	LIB. 15 J. IX
1929	Civilization and its Discontents	J. X
1931	Libidinal Types Female Sexuality	LIB. 17 J. XIII
1932	The Acquisition of Power over Fire	J. XIII
1933	New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis Why War? An International Series of Open Letters. No. 2 [with Albert Einstein]. (Paris: Int. Inst. of Intellectual Co-operation.)	LIB. 24
	(to July 1937)	

### *List of Abbreviations*

§ C.P. = Collected Papers of Sigm. Freud, 4 vols., in LIB.

§ LIB. = International Psycho-Analytical Library.

† J. = International Journal of Psycho-Analysis.

\* H. = Selected Papers on Hysteria.

§ Published by the Institute of Psycho-Analysis (London) and the Hogarth Press.

† Published by the Institute of Psycho-Analysis (London) and Baillière, Tindall & Cox Ltd., 8 Henrietta Street, W.C.1.

\* Published in Mental and Nervous Diseases Monograph Series (Vol. IV), Washington, D.C.

# THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

with the Hogarth Press

## The International Psycho-Analytical Library

Edited by DR. ERNEST JONES

The year is that of publication in this series, not that—in the case of translations—of the original.

### **Freud, Sigmund.**

1922 Beyond the Pleasure Principle. 6s.  
1922 Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. 7s. 6d.  
Collected Papers: 4 gns. the set.  
1924 Vol. I. Early Papers. History of Psycho-Analytical Movement. 21s.  
1924 Vol. II. Clinical Papers. Papers on Technique. 2nd Imp. 21s.  
1925 Vol. III. Case Histories. 2nd Imp. 30s.  
1925 Vol. IV. Papers on Metapsychology and Applied Psycho-Analysis. 2nd Imp. 21s.  
1927 The Ego and the Id. 2nd Imp. 6s.  
1928 The Future of an Illusion. 2nd Imp. 6s.  
1930 Civilization and Its Discontents. 8s. 6d.  
1933 New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis. 10s. 6d. 2nd edition, 1937.  
1935 An Autobiographical Study. 2nd Imp. 6s.  
1936 Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety. 6s.

### **Abraham, Karl.**

1927 Selected Papers. 30s.

### **Deutsch, Helene.**

1932 Psycho-Analysis of the Neuroses. 10s. 6d.

### **Ferenczi, Sándor.**

1926 Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psycho-Analysis. 28s.

*Psycho-Analytical Publications*

**Flugel, J. C.**

1921 The Psycho-Analytic Study of the Family.  
(5th Ed.) 10s. 6d.

1930 The Psychology of Clothes (Illustrated). 21s.

**Freud, Anna.**

1937 The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence. 9s.

**Jones, Ernest.**

1923 Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis. 18s.

1931 On the Nightmare. 21s.

**Klein, Melanie.**

1932 The Psycho-Analysis of Children. 2nd Imp. 18s.

**Laforgue, René.**

1932 The Defeat of Baudelaire. 10s. 6d.

1938 Clinical Aspects of Psycho-Analysis. 15s.

**Money-Kyrle, R.**

1930 The Meaning of Sacrifice. 18s.

**Putnam, J. J.**

1921 Addresses on Psycho-Analysis. 12s. 6d.

**Reik, Theodore.**

1931 Ritual. (Preface by Sigm. Freud.) 21s.

1936 The Unknown Murderer. 12s. 6d.

**Rickman, John.**

1928 Index Psycho-Analyticus, 1893-1926. 18s.

**Róheim, Géza.**

1934 The Riddle of the Sphinx. (Illustrated.) 18s.

**Sharpe, Ella.**

1937 Dream Analysis. 10s. 6d.

---

and also with the Hogarth Press

**Psycho-Analytical Epitomes**

---

With Messrs. Baillière, Tindall & Cox Ltd., 8 Henrietta  
Street, London, W.C.2

**The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis**

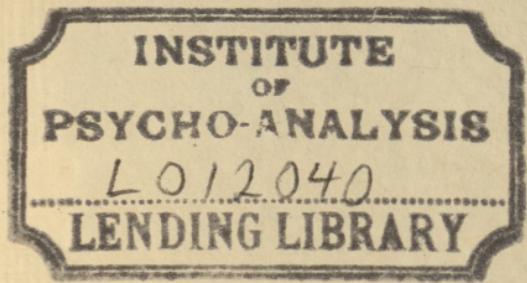
Edited by DR. ERNEST JONES

Quarterly. Price 30s. per vol. (40s. bound).

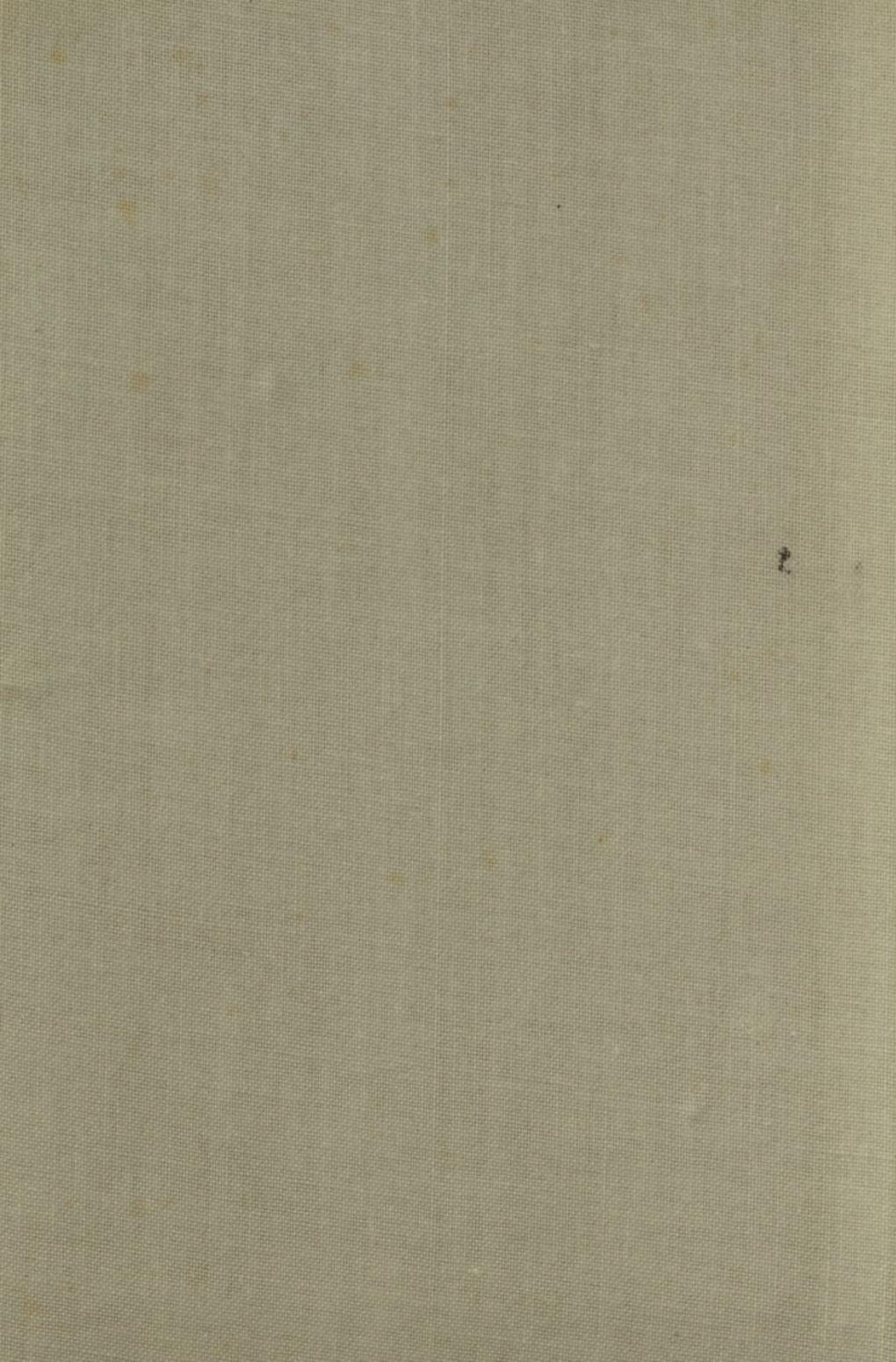
Vol. I (1920- ).







WITHDRAWN  
from the Institute of  
Psychoanalysis Library



PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES

*Edited by John Rickman, M.D.*

No. 1. A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud. 5s. net.

No. 2. Love, Hate and Reparation by Melanie Klein and Joan Riviere. 3s. 6d. net.

No. 3. Superstition and Society by R. Money-Kyrle. 4s. 6d. net.

No. 4. Civilization, War and Death : Selections from Three Works by Sigmund Freud. 3s. 6d. net.

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES No. 3

SUPERSTITION  
AND SOCIETY

by

R. MONEY-KYRLE

THIS is the third volume in a new popular series published by The Hogarth Press in collaboration with The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, and edited by John Rickman, M.D. During the last thirty years psychoanalysts have made several contributions to anthropology, which Dr. Money-Kyrle summarizes and discusses under the following headings: mythology, totemism and exogamy, animism and magic, the origin and development of culture, and culture and education. He argues that social behaviour, like the behaviour of individuals, cannot be wholly understood in terms of conscious motives alone, and looks forward to a time when anthropology and psycho-analysis in co-operation will give a deeper understanding of society and also the means to mould it more in accordance with our needs.

# PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES No. 1

## A General Selection from the Works of SIGMUND FREUD

Edited by John Rickman, M.D.

*The Times Literary Supplement*.—“This admirable volume of selections from Freud's writing is probably the best introduction to psycho-analysis at present available to the general reader . . . remarkably good value for its modest price.”

*Time and Tide*.—“Dr. Rickman's selection from the works of Freud appears to me to be admirable; in less than three hundred pages he has presented a historical outline of the development of Freud's thought . . . easily the best introduction to the general theory of psycho-analysis, and should be of very considerable use as an elementary text-book.”

*The British Journal of Psychology*.—“A book which can well be commended both to the student of psychology and to the general reader. Dr. John Rickman has made an extremely judicious and admirable selection from Freud's own writings with the definite intent of displaying the General Theory of Psycho-Analysis. . . . It is a book which deserves a wide reading, and it should have a definite influence upon general understanding of Freud's constructive work, and upon the general attitude to his theories.”

*The British Journal of Medical Psychology*.—“It possesses the kind of external attractiveness that is more often associated with literary than scientific works, so that even a reader of delicate appetite may easily find himself lured into partaking of more solid fare than he had contemplated . . . the book represents extremely good value for its price . . . for the serious student, whether beginner or advanced, this modest little volume will surely prove both valuable and attractive.”

*The Journal of Education*.—“The Editor claims, we believe with good reason, that the evolution of Freud's thought is shown more clearly in this book than in any other . . . anyone who wishes to acquaint himself with those theories will find this book a very useful guide.”

SIGMUND  
FREUD

Civilization,  
War and  
Death

Edited by  
John  
Rickman

Psycho-  
Analytical  
Epitomes  
No. 4

THE  
HOGARTH  
PRESS  
AND THE  
INSTITUTE  
OF  
PSYCHO-  
ANALYSIS

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES

Edited by John Rickman, M.D.

No. 1. A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud.  
5s. net.

No. 2. Love, Hate and Reparation by Melanie Klein and Joan Riviere.  
3s. 6d. net.

No. 3. Superstition and Society by R. Money-Kytle. 4s. 6d. net.

No. 4. Civilization, War and Death: Selections from Three Works by Sigmund Freud. 3s. 6d. net.

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES No. 3

SUPERSTITION  
AND SOCIETY  
by  
R. MONEY-KYRLE

THIS is the third volume in a new popular series published by The Hogarth Press in collaboration with The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, and edited by John Rickman, M.D. During the last thirty years psycho-analysts have made several contributions to anthropology, which Dr. Money-Kytle summarizes and discusses under the following headings: mythology, totemism and exogamy, animism and magic, the origin and development of culture, and culture and education. He argues that social behaviour, like the behaviour of individuals, cannot be wholly understood in terms of conscious motives alone, and looks forward to a time when anthropology and psycho-analysis in co-operation will give us a far deeper understanding of society and so also the means to mould it more in accordance with our needs.

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES No. 1

A General Selection from the Works of

SIGMUND FREUD

Edited by John Rickman, M.D.

*The Times Literary Supplement*.—"This admirable volume of selections from Freud's writing is probably the best introduction to psycho-analysis at present available to the general reader . . . remarkably good value for its modest price."

*Time and Tide*.—"Dr. Rickman's selection from the works of Freud appears to me to be admirable; in less than three hundred pages he has presented a historical outline of the development of Freud's thought . . . easily the best introduction to the general theory of psycho-analysis, and should be of very considerable use as an elementary text-book."

*The British Journal of Psychology*.—"A book which can well be commended both to the student of psychology and to the general reader. Dr. John Rickman has made an extremely judicious and admirable selection from Freud's own writings with the definite intent of displaying the General Theory of Psycho-Analysis. . . . It is a book which deserves a wide reading, and it should have a definite influence upon general understanding of Freud's constructive work, and upon the general attitude to his theories."

*The British Journal of Medical Psychology*.—"It possesses the kind of external attractiveness that is more often associated with literary than scientific works, so that even a reader of delicate appetite may easily find himself lured into partaking of more solid fare than he had contemplated . . . the book represents extremely good value for its price . . . for the serious student, whether beginner or advanced, this modest little volume will surely prove both valuable and attractive."

*The Journal of Education*.—"The Editor claims, we believe with good reason, that the evolution of Freud's thought is shown more clearly in this book than in any other . . . anyone who wishes to acquaint himself with those theories will find this book a very useful guide."

SIGMUND

FREUD

Civilization,  
War and  
Death

Edited by  
JOHN  
RICKMAN

Psycho-  
Analytical  
Epitomes  
No. 4

3s. 6d.  
net



THE HOGARTH  
PRESS  
AND THE  
INSTITUTE  
OF  
PSYCHO-  
ANALYSIS

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES No. 4

Civilization, War and Death

Selections from Three Works by

SIGMUND FREUD

Edited by

JOHN RICKMAN, M.D.



THE HOGARTH PRESS & THE INSTITUTE OF  
PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL EPITOMES No. 4

SIGMUND FREUD

Civilization, War and Death

Selections from Three Works

*A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, the first volume in this series, was taken from his technical writings, and showed the development of his thought in his scientific researches. This *Epitome*, taken from writings for a lay audience, shows more clearly than any other single volume his reflections on three topics of age-long and universal significance in the personal and social life of man. It consists of extracts from a long paper entitled *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915), a book *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), and an open letter to Albert Einstein, *Why War?* (1933).

3s. 6d.  
net